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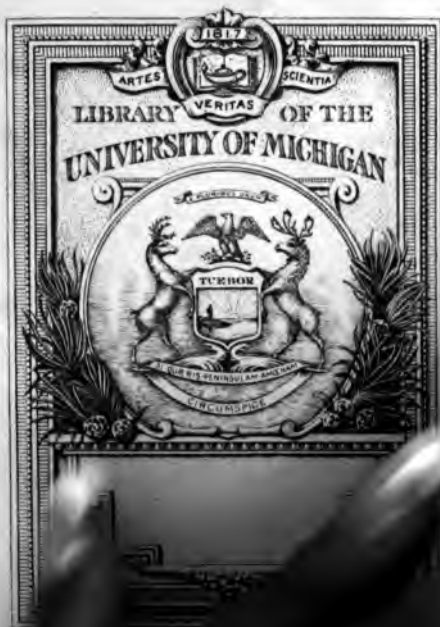
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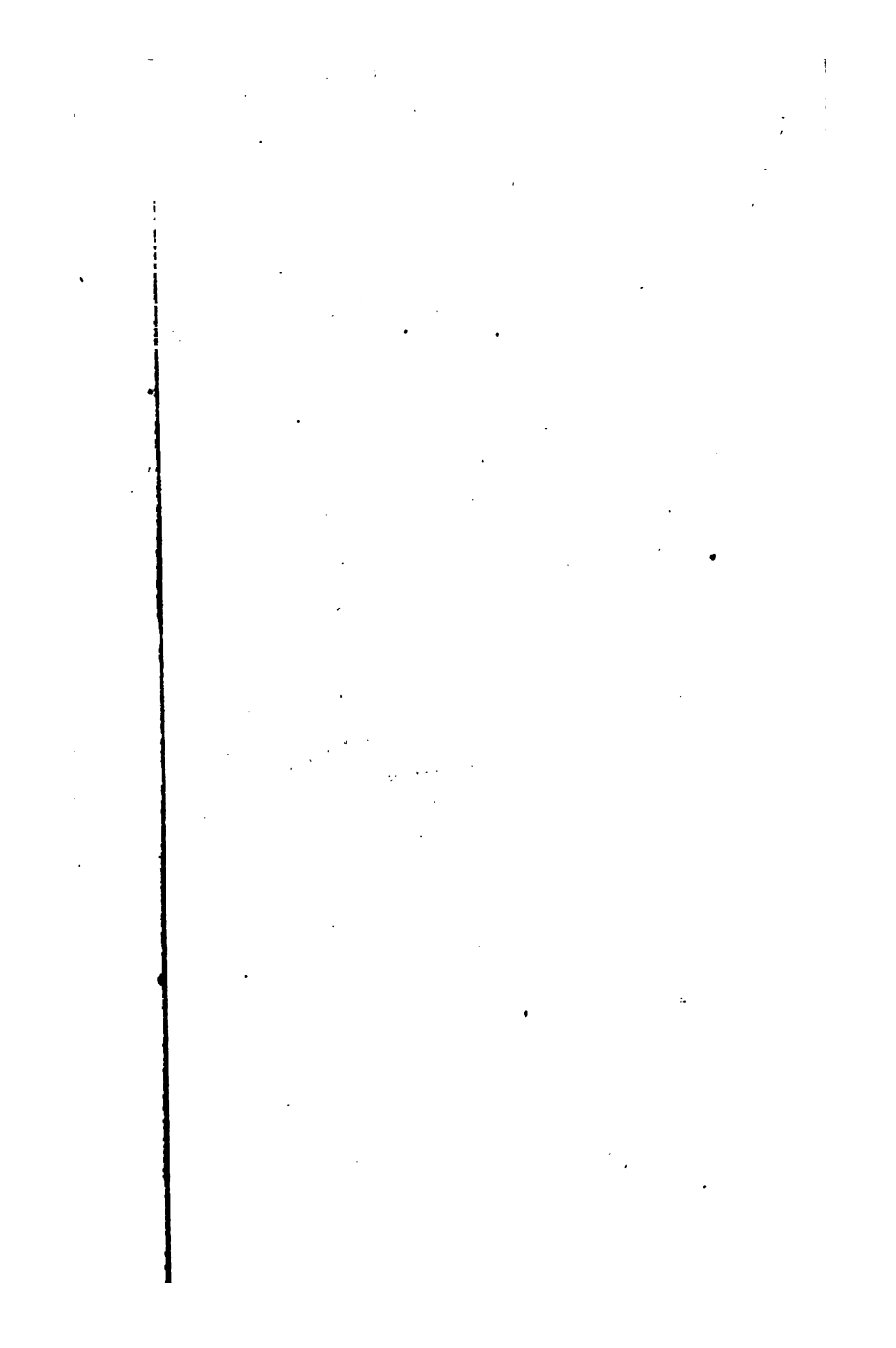


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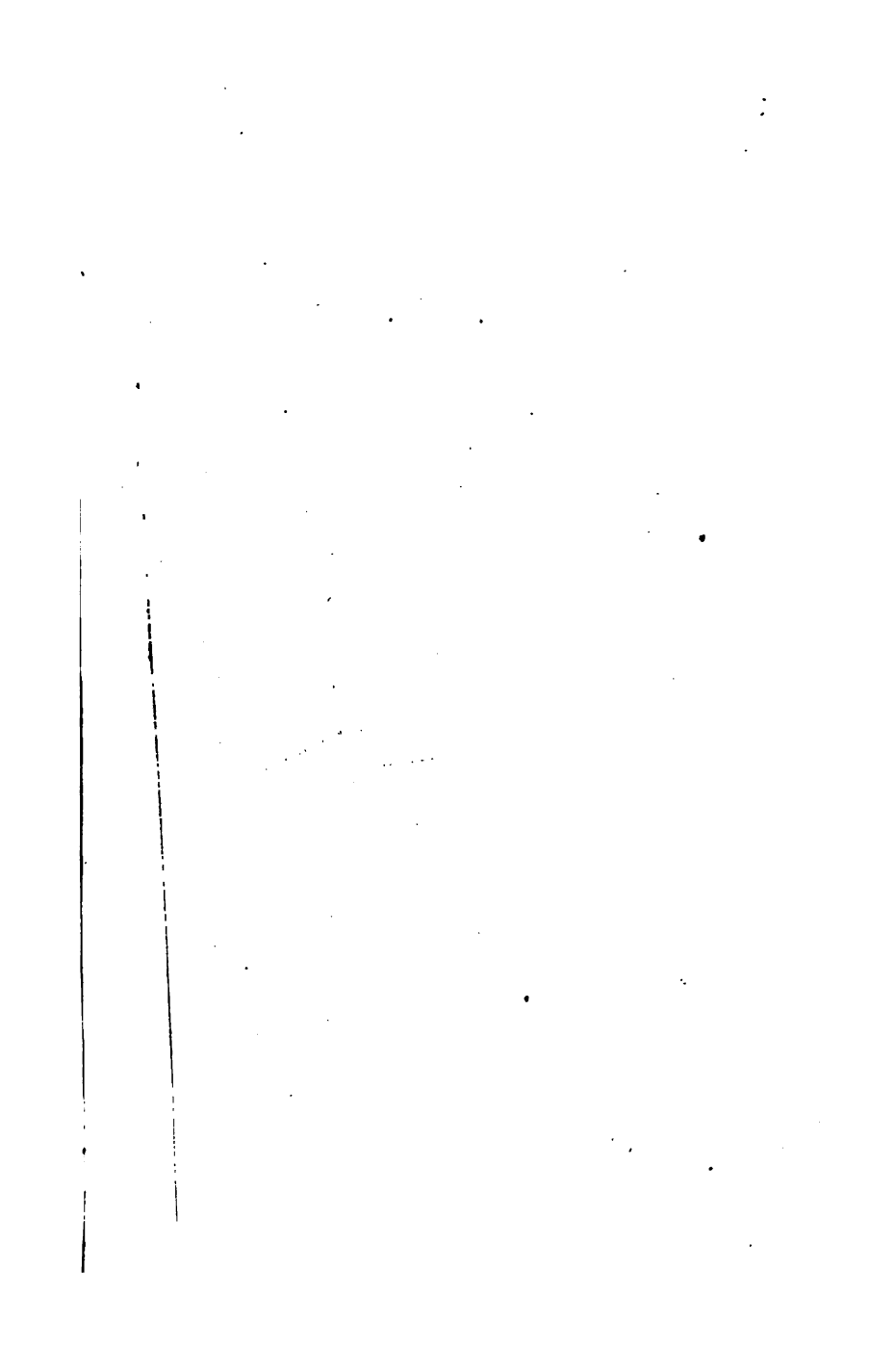
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AMERICAN LIFE.

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A NARRATIVE

OF

TWO YEARS' CITY AND COUNTRY RESIDENCE

IN THE

UNITED STATES.

BY MRS. FELTON.

HOWARD,

AND CO.

LEEDS :  
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## P R E F A C E .

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IN submitting these few sheets to the public, the authoress wishes to be considered, as presenting a faithful record of her observations, and of events as they occurred within the limits of her experience, during her continuance, for the space of two years, both in the city of New York and at her residence in the country.

Whenever she has felt herself called upon to give an opinion, she has endeavoured impartially to comply; and when, in delineating characters, she has been compelled to draw upon fiction for names, in order to avoid inflicting an injury by an unnecessary exposure; it may be concluded with certainty, that the *names alone are fictitious*, and that the individuals there represented, are correctly depicted in their proper colours.

While employed in preparing this small volume

for the press, that opinion, so frequently expressed by the Americans, has often occurred to her: viz. "That should a book be written on their country, containing truth in its unalloyed simplicity, it would for ever lie on the shelves of the bookseller, as no encouragement would be given in England, to any publication on *such a subject*, unless it were rendered palatable by libels and falsehoods." Although sufficiently convinced herself, of the fallacy of this notion, it has still had some influence in inducing as much caution, as if these pages were about to be submitted as a test to decide the fate of some such experiment.

She has endeavoured throughout, so to unite amusement with useful information, as to make this volume desirable both as a book of utility to the emigrant, and as a volume of entertainment, to those who prefer viewing the other side the Atlantic through the safer medium of the press. How far she has succeeded, must be left to the judgement of a discerning public to determine.

# AMERICAN LIFE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE VOYAGE.

THE day on which we sailed was clear and serene, and we gently drifted with the tide down Belfast Lough into the Channel. Assured that I should not be able to see land on the following morning, I kept my eyes fixed upon the hills in the distance, till darkness rendered them no longer visible. I never undertake a voyage or a journey, without a vague feeling of melancholy—there is something strangely depressing in the preliminaries of departure; the packing of boxes—the arrangement of books, clothes, and papers—the whole valedictory ceremony has in it something very oppressive, and always excites sensations of sadness.—Indeed, I seldom visit a place, even for a few



weeks, without meeting with some agreeable associates, whose company I feel loath to relinquish, and sometimes find this impracticable, without attesting my emotions by tears. These, however, form an inadequate representation of the state of my mind at a time when I was leaving the shores of Europe, with the prospect of a long, and perhaps, a final separation. But in this instance, these unpleasant sensations were greatly alleviated, by considering that the presence of those whom I hold dearer than all other earthly treasures, was with me in the vessel; I mean my husband and my children.

The next morning, we found ourselves going at a rapid rate under the influence of a gale, far too brisk for personal comfort. Our vessel was rather small, but she was, what is termed by sailors "a good sea-boat;" and for that reason alone, on account of her pitching and rolling, very unpleasant for passengers. The whole of the company in the cabin were distressingly affected with nausea, and so long as this gale lasted, we were quite in a passive and suffering condition.

This distressing concomitant of a long voyage

affects individuals variously, according to their ages, constitutions, and previous habits of life. My personal sufferings were very severe, and were augmented by the care of an infant of six months. I had a servant on board, but she required as much attention from the steward as myself: and I now discovered, to my great inconvenience, what I had frequently heard others affirm,—that very few servants indeed, whatever be their representations, are capable of performing their duties, during the first week of a voyage.

The next day the gale increased to something like a storm, and for safety, I was recommended to retire to my berth. While lying there, helpless and almost in an inanimate state, a box which had escaped my notice containing a compass, fell from a small shelf just above my head, and struck me a violent blow with its sharp corner, upon my temples. From the weight of the box, it was supposed that, had my head reclined only one-fourth of an inch in another direction, the consequences must have been fatal: my infant also had a narrow escape, having been removed from my side only a few minutes before. I suffered much however, as it was; but

I ought eternally to acknowledge, with lively feelings of gratitude, this merciful interposition of an over-ruling Providence in my favour.

During the continuance of this storm or gale, all the passengers on board without a single exception were laid aside—the assistance of a female could not be obtained either for love or for money. There we lay, helpless in our berths, and I think, I never partook of food for upwards of two days: nor was my case in this respect, by any means singular. I have performed long voyages both before and since, and have always been similarly affected.

I would earnestly recommend families going abroad, who are anxious to secure the advantage of a surgeon, to require a personal interview with the individual who is to act in that capacity; particularly if they sail from a foreign port. Such a precaution would frequently prevent much disappointment, as the person who is introduced as “the doctor,” not unfrequently turns out to be some smith or barber, redolent of rum, and dressed in shabby black: and perhaps appearances will not be found much improved by his conversational talents.

The cabin of a packet ship bound to a distant port, is a bazaar of character. Here are assembled individuals, the very antipodes of each other in religion, politics, employment, country, and language. Here, the gay and the grave, the religious and the profane, with their peculiar prejudices and partialities, meet upon one common plane of equality. Under no other circumstances can this take place. Boarding houses indeed, on the Continent and in America, have some resemblance; but there, an opportunity is afforded for selection; here, choice is impossible, the company, be its composition ever so heterogeneous, is confined within a circumscribed space from which there is no retreat; and all are obliged to spend the whole of their time together in that part of the vessel which they have selected.

Our cabin company however, was by no means numerous. Besides myself and my family, it consisted of the captain and his wife, both originally from Connecticut; a Mrs. Johnson, an English lady; an Irish lady from Antrim; an English manufacturer; a young American merchant; a young Irishman; and a youth of dubious origin called, James.

The captain and his lady were, in point of disposition, the most unlovely specimen of Americans I ever met with, either before or since, and were calculated, every way to give us a most unfavourable opinion of the state of society in their country. Ever since his first voyage to Europe, the captain had formed an unfavourable opinion of the English, from two circumstances, that none, but a person of his own cast of mind, would adduce as distinguishing marks of the English character. I remember, one of these grievances was, that some one on the quay at Liverpool, had applied to him the unpalatable term of "transported Yankee," garnished with some accompaniments by no means complimentary. For this, and something else equally important, he seemed to consider himself justifiable in insulting every Englishman with whom he came in contact, and lost no opportunity of indulging himself in every unamiable species of retaliation that he found conveniently practicable. Morose, and remarkably ignorant, he was eternally smoking cigars; but fortunately for our comfort, possessed the negative virtue of sobriety. Out of his profession, he was nobody, but we had just reason to believe that his

nautical talents were of the highest order ; and to us, this was certainly a matter of the first importance.

Our private cabins, in which were our berths, were so constructed, that every word said in them might be as distinctly heard in the public cabin, as if we ourselves were all there assembled. On the first day of our embarkation, while I was alone in mine, changing my dress, the cabin being occupied by the captain and a few of his personal friends, who had accompanied him on the voyage with a view of returning in the Pilot boat, when their conversation was about the passengers on board, all of whom, excepting myself, were on deck at that time, I then heard the captain affirm, after alluding to his English passengers, "*that if an Englishman were to fall over board he would not throw out a rope to save him.*" I distinctly heard him make this assertion, and shall never forget the sensations it produced—I heard also his wife's amiable *applaudissement* of this fiend-like expression! This last did not surprise me, as it was in exact accordance with the opinion I had formed of her character, from the first glance of her physiog-

nomy. By cautioning them for the future, to be more guarded in their private communications, I let them know I was in possession of their sentiments; and I thought proper to point out the way in which I obtained my information, in order to convince them that I was above the meanness of listening.

The captain used to commence the day with doing the formidable among the sailors. Having discharged upon these poor fellows, all the steam of ill humour that had accumulated during the previous night, he would descend into the cabin and take breakfast. We had frequently remarked, that during this repast, he invariably attempted to make some one of us miserable, by indulging in some insulting remarks, artfully delivered in the form of opinions; so, in order to defeat his amiable intentions, we agreed to preserve a dead silence, or to only speak in the most laconic manner possible; concluding that he could not long amuse himself with a monologue. His advent was agreed upon to be the signal for us to prepare to carry our designs into execution. There we sat—with nun like gravity, quaffing our coffee in silence, as toasts are drank to the memory of the departed!

This negative species of defence had its desired effect. Annoyed by our taciturnity, which necessarily imposed a similar penance on himself, he would turn in despair to his wife. Here he was either entirely unsuccessful, or otherwise amused with an inceptive taste of matrimonial infelicity.

This was the second month of their marriage. His wife who was the daughter of a Connecticut farmer, she was about twenty-five years of age, and somewhat diminutive in person. Her countenance on all occasions, preserved the rigidity of a statue, except when excited to dart a look of malevolence; or, when she endeavoured to assume an air of authority: on this latter occasion it presented the funniest appearance imaginable. Transplanted from the domestic employment of a small farm, to do the honours of the cabin table, she evidently felt herself greatly exalted, and bore her elevation with the worst possible grace. Of a mean and suspicious cast of mind, and conscious of being alike destitute of outward attractions and internal excellencies, she was in consequence, jealous in the extreme, and always interpreted any little attention paid to another, in her presence, a direct insult offered to



herself. Her conduct to the poor black steward, was marked with haughtiness and cruelty; and as some say, vulgar pride is commonly united with meanness and tyranny, certainly in her the union of this triune cluster of graces was strictly preserved.

The English lady, Mrs. Johnson, was an amiable personage. She was, in my judgement, as correct a personification of virtue as any, with whom I have had the happiness of being associated; devout without superstition—cheerful without levity—refined without affectation—and well informed, without literary pretension, she might pass for a model.

The Antrim lady was a very good natured creature. She stood on equal ground with the captain's wife in point of educational advantages, or rather disadvantages; but was her opposite in every thing else. She was remarkably agreeable, and possessed that truly Christian qualification I so much admire—an earnest desire to make every one happy. Her foibles were the result of her unfortunately limited education. But I found in her case, as in some others, that a redundant flow of animal spirits is no certain evidence of weak intellects or shallow feelings.

The young Irishman was a warm hearted being. His constant amusement was humming tunes and writing poetry. For the latter he had an unconquerable passion. He expressed himself as being confidently assured, that he possessed the true spirit of poetry; and that, at some time, not far distant, he should distinguish himself above the herd of mankind. He was greatly encouraged to devote his time to the muses, by having heard it repeatedly said in his family, that his great grandfather was a poet—that is, that he had written something that had pleased somebody. From this, it appears, that the poor young man, supposing poetry to be like the gout, hereditary, and like that distemper, would sleep in the blood for generations, and descending from father to son, would break out after the lapse of a century—concluded hypothetically, that the fire of poetry would some day blaze out from him, and astonish the world.

Poets, like other authors, and some say author-esses, are reported as never being satisfied without large draughts of unqualified praise. From his teasing the gentlemen with his verses, it seems he possessed this unfortunate propensity; and I must

confess, if his poetry deserved as much praise as it produced merriment, *it was excellent!*

The American merchant was a gentleman of a quiet disposition, and rather reserved. Although both countrymen, the captain and he appeared most cordially to detest each other.

There was a youth on board, about twenty years of age, whom the captain called "James," and who described himself as an Englishman. He was ostensibly under the protection of the captain, who appeared to be somewhat ashamed of his charge. He surpassed all, of whom I have ever heard or read, in the vicious practice of telling falsehoods. For the first few days he led us all into a labyrinth of misunderstandings. His tales were so perplexingly mischievous, and at the same time so easily detected, that it was truly astonishing for what purpose he gave them utterance. The gentlemen appeared determined to convince him, by forcible arguments, that such conduct would not be tolerated with impunity. On a particular occasion, his presence of mind happily suggested absence of body, as the best means to avoid the result of a discovery likely to prove unpleasant *to his feelings*: and, as

fear drove him to the forward part of the vessel, shame kept him there—a place, no doubt far better suited to his taste than the one he had evacuated. How the captain would account for this to his friends, I cannot imagine; but they must know the propensity of this James too well to believe *his* assertions, even if called forth by a dispute respecting *the certainty of his own existence!* He said he was an Englishman, and *that* we considered, as conclusive evidence that he was not.

After we had been a few hours under weigh, one of the crew jumped over board, under the influence of intoxication; a boat was immediately lowered, and the poor foolish fellow was rescued from a watery grave. The passengers, from a mistaken notion of good nature, had furnished this man with what might have proved his destruction. On this occasion, the captain exerted his prerogative in a judicious manner, by compelling all on board to surrender their stores of spirits, &c. and not a single glass was allowed to either officers or men, during the whole of the voyage. This caused some murmuring, particularly among the passengers, but they soon became reconciled to

what was unavoidable; and although several declared they should perish if deprived of their daily drops, yet incredible as it may appear, there was not a single death registered on the ship's books from such a cause!

The steerage of the vessel was occupied by upwards of a hundred passengers, almost the whole of whom were Irish: they behaved exceedingly well. Perhaps the absence of the circulating medium of friendship (whiskey) was the principal cause of their good conduct. The following circumstance, which fell under my immediate notice, I confess, inclines me to adopt this opinion. Shortly after we arrived at New York, a vessel, freighted in a similar manner to this in which we were, discharged its living cargo on the north side of the city. The passengers leaped joyfully on shore, vociferating cheers for the Land of Liberty, and rushed into the neighbouring spirit stores to regale themselves. The liquor they imbibed so effectually blinded their minds to all distinction of *meum* and *tuum*, that they proceeded to select *shillaleighs* from a cargo of hickory wood just landed, that was sawn into lengths of four feet, and of various

degrees of thickness. With these they furiously assailed each other—the police were ordered out—and nearly all of them were allowed, for the space of a month (I think), to sing praises to the “land of liberty” within the walls of a prison. Disorderly characters are much more severely punished in the United States than here. With us, misconduct, proceeding from intoxication, is too frequently treated as a joke—there, it is no joke.

After the distressing nausea had ceased to torment us, we found some few enjoyments of which we had entertained no previous expectation. Those who have not passed a moon-light evening at sea, are unacquainted with one of the principal pleasures of life. The solemn, yet placid moaning of the ocean—the rich variety of light and shade, produced by the falling of the moon-beams on the waves—the boundless expanse that lies open to the view—the peaceful grandeur that reigns, broken only by sounds that harmonize with the majesty of the scene—all unite to present an association of the peaceful, the splendid, and the sublime, of which the pencil can convey no adequate idea.

With the converse of a friend, on these delight-

ful evenings, when the vessel was darting over the mighty waters with the celerity of a swallow, I seemed to enjoy more than fabled Elysian pleasures. Or when all was still, and the ship calmly reposing on the bosom of the ocean, I could send my thoughts eastward, over the surrounding world of waters, and indulge in a rapturous retrospect. At these seasons, the home of my youthful days appeared invested with its most captivating attractions. The village green—the grove, with the distant mill—the surrounding landscape—

And every stump,—familiar to my sight  
Recalled some fond idea of delight.

These scenes of my childhood, as if abounding with the delights of Paradise, would excite emotions exquisitely sublime, yet slightly tinctured with a pleasing sadness. Wherever, through this wide world, my wandering feet may turn; my country, and particularly the place of my nativity, will never cease to attract my affections with a cord—fine, indeed, and tenuous as the slightest gossamer, yet strong as the stoutest cable.

This may be called an ebullition of enthusiasm,

the sole effect of feminine weakness—but the greatest characters on earth have confessed its power. Seneca, banished to Corsica, found his philosophy fail, in a vain attempt to reconcile him to the island, and pathetically entreats the soil of the land of his banishment, to lie lightly on the ashes of the living. To Seneca, Corsica was a grave. But on the other hand, Napoleon, to whom the same island was a cradle, declared when in exile, that if once more permitted to see the place of his nativity, he should embrace the ground with rapture; and even if led blindfold, he could discover it by the very smell.

Our time hung heavily on our hands, during the day. The continual motion of the vessel prohibited us from doing exactly what we desired; but I fear, want of inclination prevented some of us from employing ourselves, where useful employment was really practicable. During these hours of idleness, the gentlemen amused themselves with shooting at stormy petrels; birds in some degree resembling the martin, and whose residence is confined to the main ocean: *it is said* they are never to be seen within two hundred miles of land.



Shoot *at them*, they did indeed, about twenty times a day; but although the birds were seen, almost in a state of quiescence, riding upon the summit of the huge waves, and frequently within a few yards of the gun's muzzle—not one was ever shot. From observation, I became so confident that they would *hit something*, that I removed my children from the deck for safety.

Some say that these birds, like the enemies of the Puritans, possess a charm against cold lead. This attribute is perhaps, as true as that of their eternal residence on the waves of the ocean; and is not entirely destitute of utility, if it serve to excuse the inexpertness of nautical sportsmen.

We had been perplexed for many days with light winds, and were driven far northward. After we had been about twenty days under sail, and had reached a very high latitude, the air, influenced by the neighbouring ice-bergs, became very cold. While in this position, one star-light night, about seven o'clock, we were surprised by the appearance of a phenomenon in the heavens, which we, at first, conceived to be an *aurora borealis*; but it did not correspond, in every particular, with the

descriptions we have read and heard of the *aurora*. I shall here attempt to describe it.

Let the reader imagine the arc of a circle, about  $90^{\circ}$  in length, with its concave side turned due north. From its *convex* side, divergent streams of light were seen about  $30^{\circ}$  in length, equal in all points, and distinctly exhibiting in brilliant display, all the colours of the rainbow. Without shooting or darting, they remained in all their splendour for a full hour. After that period, they began gradually to grow dim, but preserved their position till they were no longer visible: this was about two hours from their first appearance.

One evening, when the state of the weather compelled us to remain below deck, and the poet, as usual, was humming tunes, the ladies working with the needle, and the gentlemen conversing; the captain happened to express his intention, on his return, to sell his estate in Connecticut, and in connection, said something about a *lien*. Now, this word, *lien*, is frequently used, I am told, in New England, to express a mortgage; and is usually there pronounced like the name of the animal *lion*; —this pronunciation the captain employed. He

lady scarcely finished the sentence, when the poet with astonishment exclaimed, "Bless me! I never knew there were lions in America—can that be true?"—"The true, to my sorrow I know it," was the captain's reply. The poet seemed all amazement. We remained silent, and he fixed his eyes, in imploring inquisitiveness on the captain's wife, supposing that being a native, she must of course, be capable of satisfying his curiosity. But that lady's countenance had changed its solemn blankness, and her eyes were darting rays of anger at her husband. The poor poet however, regardless of her transfiguration, continued, with solemn unconsciousness to ply her for the meaning of the term. This was too much—overcome by her feelings, she sank down and gave vent to a flood of tears.

It was easy for us, who were acquainted with her, to divine the cause of her emotions. She had frequently alluded to the thousands of acres she inherited,—indeed, her ridiculous assumption of the heiress had been truly disgusting;—and now her partner had innocently disclosed the mortifying fact, that this property was encumbered by a *lien*.—Hence her tears!

The number of porpoises that played around the ship, seemed to enjoy as much amusement as they imparted. The rapidity with which these unwieldly creatures move, is very surprising. From a rough calculation, made by a gentleman on board, taking the rate of the vessel for his datum, their speed was about thirty miles per hour. We saw some flying fish ; they are elegant little things, and when seen in a certain position, resemble the pictorial representation of miniature angels.

A few sharks were seen darting through the water. They abound on the American coast, and render sea bathing very dangerous. Their usual practice is, to scour the shore with the incoming tide, in search of food ; and for that reason, it is safe to bathe only when the tide is receding. From ignorance of this circumstance, accidents have occurred to Europeans, which in some instances, have been attended with fatal consequences.

It is generally understood, from the remarks of some naturalists, that the shark turns on its side when in the act of seizing its prey ; and, that while he is changing his position, the object of his attack *has time* to escape. This must be recorded

from hearsay. The celerity, with which the voracious creature cuts through the water, surpasses comprehension—the human eye can scarcely follow him. I have had frequent opportunities of observing him, when seizing his prey or a bait, and have witnessed experiments made in clear water for the purpose of attesting the truth of the above assertion; and all that I could discover, amounts to a possibility that he may perhaps, slightly swerve his body;—but, even if so, there is scarcely time given for an intent observer to notice the motion; and to escape, when once within his reach, is absolutely impracticable.

In descending from the north we crossed the banks of Newfoundland. These banks are covered with water, varying in depth from twenty to sixty fathoms. Here, innumerable quantities of fish are nourished, by vegetable substances washed down in the Gulf Stream; and fishing smacks, from all parts of Europe and America, assemble here, at certain seasons, to take in their cargoes. Were the whole world supplied with fish from this quarter, it is supposed no perceptible diminution would occur. The eagerness of the fish in taking a bait in salt

water is really astonishing; and forms a striking contrast to the caution evinced, under similar circumstances, by the fresh water species.

A fog prevailed during our passage across the banks. This I understood, is by no means an unusual occurrence, and is said to be produced by evaporation. We found the water here, to preserve a uniformity of appearance with that on soundings: in the main ocean it is many shades darker in colour.

Considering the immense traffic between Europe and the New World, I was surprised at the paucity of vessels that crossed the field of our view; during the whole passage, we only saw three! We spoke with two of these; one was a whaler, in search of those monsters of the deep, of which we had seen no less than nine.

After we had cleared the banks, we were favoured with an auspicious gale, that carried us along at a rapid rate, till we were very near land; but, before we had the happiness to enjoy the sight of that desired object, we were surrounded by another dense fog. We continued however, to scud along for several hours, till the captain judged

it prudent to take in sail; observing, that according to his reckoning, we must be close upon land; and, that if the fog would permit him to discover a particular floating light, he would take in the vessel the same night without the assistance of a pilot. This however, was not the case.

This evening, we of the cabin missed several things, on arranging our luggage for landing. To those whom such advice will benefit, I would say "Take from your main store, as few valuables as possible, that are conveniently portable; and furnish yourselves with common articles, if you wish to keep your superior ones." The chief loss of my party was in books, spoons, and children's forks. I had provided the two latter articles expressly for the occasion, in anticipation of what might occur; and those who "borrowed" them, no doubt have discovered ere this, that "it is not all gold that glitters"—nor yet silver.

The next morning's sun shone bright to every eye on board.—The cry of "Land off the larboard bow" was hailed with rapturous cheers—there indeed it was, plain enough, and only about half a league from the vessel—and there was the floating

light, dimly flickering from the head of an old hulk, moored at a similar distance, on the starboard. When we considered the thousands of miles we had sailed—the extremes of latitude to which we were driven (from  $40^{\circ}$  to  $65^{\circ}$ )—the impracticability of taking an observation for the two preceding days, on account of the weather—we were surprised at the judgement of the captain, who could, under such disadvantages, bring a vessel through a fog within a few cables' length of land, and declare her position!

We sailed past Sandy Hook to the usual rendezvous of all vessels bound to the city of New York—the quarantine ground. This place is situated about seven miles from the city, it is a narrow channel, formed by the near approximation of Staten Island and Long Island.

Close by the water's edge, on Staten Island, an hospital is situated, for the reception of invalids from foreign vessels. It is chiefly supported by a capitation tax of two dollars, demanded from every foreigner before he lands; and in case of default, he is taken to prison! But more of this hereafter. We were boarded and examined by a surgeon, who



ful evenings, when the vessel was darting over the mighty waters with the celerity of a swallow, I seemed to enjoy more than fabled Elysian pleasures. Or when all was still, and the ship calmly reposing on the bosom of the ocean, I could send my thoughts eastward, over the surrounding world of waters, and indulge in a rapturous retrospect. At these seasons, the home of my youthful days appeared invested with its most captivating attractions. The village green—the grove, with the distant mill—the surrounding landscape—

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the sole effect of feminine weakness—but the greatest characters on earth have confessed its power. Seneca, banished to Corsica, found his philosophy fail, in a vain attempt to reconcile him to the island, and pathetically entreats the soil of the land of his banishment, to lie lightly on the ashes of the living. To Seneca, Corsica was a grave. But on the other hand, Napoleon, to whom the same island was a cradle, declared when in exile, that if once more permitted to see the place of his nativity, he should embrace the ground with rapture; and even if led blindfold, he could discover it by the very smell.

Our time hung heavily on our hands, during the day. The continual motion of the vessel prohibited us from doing exactly what we desired; but I fear, want of inclination prevented some of us from employing ourselves, where useful employment was really practicable. During these hours of idleness, the gentlemen amused themselves with shooting at stormy petrels; birds in some degree resembling the martin, and whose residence is confined to the main ocean: *it is said* they are never to be seen within two hundred miles of land.

Shoot *at them*, they did indeed, about twenty times a day; but although the birds were seen, almost in a state of quiescence, riding upon the summit of the huge waves, and frequently within a few yards of the gun's muzzle—not one was ever shot. From observation, I became so confident that they would *hit something*, that I removed my children from the deck for safety.

Some say that these birds, like the enemies of the Puritans, possess a charm against cold lead. This attribute is perhaps, as true as that of their eternal residence on the waves of the ocean; and is not entirely destitute of utility, if it serve to excuse the inexpertness of nautical sportsmen.

We had been perplexed for many days with light winds, and were driven far northward. After we had been about twenty days under sail, and had reached a very high latitude, the air, influenced by the neighbouring ice-bergs, became very cold. While in this position, one star-light night, about seven o'clock, we were surprised by the appearance of a phenomenon in the heavens, which we, at first, conceived to be an *aurora borealis*; but it did not correspond, in every particular, with the

descriptions we have read and heard of the *aurora*. I shall here attempt to describe it.

Let the reader imagine the arc of a circle, about  $90^{\circ}$  in length, with its concave side turned due north. From its *convex* side, divergent streams of light were seen about  $30^{\circ}$  in length, equal in all points, and distinctly exhibiting in brilliant display, all the colours of the rainbow. Without shooting or darting, they remained in all their splendour for a full hour. After that period, they began gradually to grow dim, but preserved their position till they were no longer visible: this was about two hours from their first appearance.

One evening, when the state of the weather compelled us to remain below deck, and the poet, as usual, was humming tunes, the ladies working with the needle, and the gentlemen conversing; the captain happened to express his intention, on his return, to sell his estate in Connecticut, and in connection, said something about a *lien*. Now, this word, *lien*, is frequently used, I am told, in New England, to express a mortgage; and is usually there pronounced like the name of the animal *lion*;—this pronunciation the captain employed. He

had scarcely finished the sentence, when the poet with astonishment exclaimed, " Bless me ! I never knew there were lions in America—can that be true ?"—" Too true, to my sorrow I know it," was the captain's reply. The poet seemed all amazement. We remained silent, and he fixed his eyes, in imploring inquisitiveness on the captain's wife, supposing that being a native, she must of course, be capable of satisfying his curiosity. But that lady's countenance had changed its solemn blankness, and her eyes were darting rays of anger at her husband. The poor poet however, regardless of her transfiguration, continued, with solemn unconsciousness to ply her for the meaning of the term. This was too much—overcome by her feelings, she sank down and gave vent to a flood of tears.

It was easy for us, who were acquainted with her, to divine the cause of her emotions. She had frequently alluded to the thousands of acres she inherited,—indeed, her ridiculous assumption of the heiress had been truly disgusting ;—and now her partner had innocently disclosed the mortifying fact, that this property was encumbered by a *lien*.—Hence her tears !

The number of porpoises that played around the ship, seemed to enjoy as much amusement as they imparted. The rapidity with which these unwieldy creatures move, is very surprising. From a rough calculation, made by a gentleman on board, taking the rate of the vessel for his datum, their speed was about thirty miles per hour. We saw some flying fish ; they are elegant little things, and when seen in a certain position, resemble the pictorial representation of miniature angels.

A few sharks were seen darting through the water. They abound on the American coast, and render sea bathing very dangerous. Their usual practice is, to scour the shore with the incoming tide, in search of food ; and for that reason, it is safe to bathe only when the tide is receding. From ignorance of this circumstance, accidents have occurred to Europeans, which in some instances, have been attended with fatal consequences.

It is generally understood, from the remarks of some naturalists, that the shark turns on its side when in the act of seizing its prey ; and, that while he is changing his position, the object of his attack *has time* to escape. This must be recorded

from hearsay. The celerity, with which the voracious creature cuts through the water, surpasses comprehension—the human eye can scarcely follow him. I have had frequent opportunities of observing him, when seizing his prey or a bait, and have witnessed experiments made in clear water for the purpose of attesting the truth of the above assertion; and all that I could discover, amounts to a possibility that he may perhaps, slightly swerve his body;—but, even if so, there is scarcely time given for an intent observer to notice the motion; and to escape, when once within his reach, is absolutely impracticable.

In descending from the north we crossed the banks of Newfoundland. These banks are covered with water, varying in depth from twenty to sixty fathoms. Here, innumerable quantities of fish are nourished, by vegetable substances washed down in the Gulf Stream; and fishing smacks, from all parts of Europe and America, assemble here, at certain seasons, to take in their cargoes. Were the whole world supplied with fish from this quarter, it is supposed no perceptible diminution would occur. The eagerness of the fish in taking a bait in salt

water is really astonishing; and forms a striking contrast to the caution evinced, under similar circumstances, by the fresh water species.

A fog prevailed during our passage across the banks. This I understood, is by no means an unusual occurrence, and is said to be produced by evaporation. We found the water here, to preserve a uniformity of appearance with that on soundings: in the main ocean it is many shades darker in colour.

Considering the immense traffic between Europe and the New World, I was surprised at the paucity of vessels that crossed the field of our view; during the whole passage, we only saw three! We spoke with two of these; one was a whaler, in search of those monsters of the deep, of which we had seen no less than nine.

After we had cleared the banks, we were favoured with an auspicious gale, that carried us along at a rapid rate, till we were very near land; but, before we had the happiness to enjoy the sight of that desired object, we were surrounded by another dense fog. We continued however, to scud along for several hours, till the captain judged



it prudent to take in sail; observing, that according to his reckoning, we must be close upon land; and, that if the fog would permit him to discover a particular floating light, he would take in the vessel the same night without the assistance of a pilot. This however, was not the case.

This evening, we of the cabin missed several things, on arranging our luggage for landing. To those whom such advice will benefit, I would say "Take from your main store, as few valuables as possible, that are conveniently portable; and furnish yourselves with common articles, if you wish to keep your superior ones." The chief loss of my party was in books, spoons, and children's forks. I had provided the two latter articles expressly for the occasion, in anticipation of what might occur; and those who "borrowed" them, no doubt have discovered ere this, that "it is not all gold that glitters"—nor yet silver.

The next morning's sun shone bright to every eye on board.—The cry of "Land off the larboard bow" was hailed with rapturous cheers—there indeed it was, plain enough, and only about half a league from the vessel—and there was the floating

light, dimly flickering from the head of an old hulk, moored at a similar distance, on the starboard. When we considered the thousands of miles we had sailed—the extremes of latitude to which we were driven (from  $40^{\circ}$  to  $65^{\circ}$ )—the impracticability of taking an observation for the two preceding days, on account of the weather—we were surprised at the judgement of the captain, who could, under such disadvantages, bring a vessel through a fog within a few cables' length of land, and declare her position!

We sailed past Sandy Hook to the usual rendezvous of all vessels bound to the city of New York—the quarantine ground. This place is situated about seven miles from the city, it is a narrow channel, formed by the near approximation of Staten Island and Long Island.

Close by the water's edge, on Staten Island, an hospital is situated, for the reception of invalids from foreign vessels. It is chiefly supported by a capitation tax of two dollars, demanded from every foreigner before he lands; and in case of default, he is taken to prison! But more of this hereafter. We were boarded and examined by a surgeon, who

found all to be in health, except one old woman, who, to our consternation, was discovered in the steerage dangerously ill. She was placed in a boat, and rowed to the shore with all expedition, and died just as she entered the hospital. Had the poor old creature departed ten minutes sooner, we should have been quarantined, I understand for twenty days. After remaining here for nearly twelve hours, we weighed anchor and floated with the tide to the city.

## CHAPTER II.

## DESCRIPTION OF NEW YORK.—CHURCHES.—

## THEATRES.—AUCTIONS.—UNCLE SAM.

The bay of New York is a fine piece of water, studded with islands, and is usually first viewed with sensations of agreeable surprise. From its designation, I expected to find it presenting a semi-circular form, like most other bays; but to the eye of an individual entering from the Atlantic, it assumes the appearance of a fine circular lake, about eight miles in diameter; and, I think, that term would describe it more correctly than the one adopted. In strict propriety, either is a misnomer—it is an estuary. This magnificent sheet of water, by whatever name it may be known, is bounded on the north by Manhattan Island, on the southern extremity of which stands the city of New York.

It was just before sun set, on a delightful evening in the month of October, allowed to be, by far, the pleasantest period of a transatlantic year,

when we approached this commercial metropolis of the New World. Here the atmosphere, like that of Italy, is extremely clear: it imparts a charming lustre to the surrounding landscape, and clothes the scenery with an appearance of inconceivable brilliancy. Under these advantages the prospect was most delightful. We seemed as if gently gliding over a sea of fluid gold. In the distance, guarded by unnumbered vessels stood the city, occupying a dignified station on the banks, and just at the point of confluence of two of the finest rivers in the world. These, the magnificent Hudson, and the Eastern River, were seen pouring their tributary floods of liquid light, into the bosom of this splendid estuary. On the right, were the heights of Long Island—far off, on the left, was Jersey City, stationed on the coast which gives its name. The whole prospect, enriched by a pleasing variety of wood and water and viewed through the bright medium of this clear atmosphere, rendered still more brilliant by the setting sun, combined to form a scene, most enchantingly beautiful—too grand, indeed, for the most sanguine imagination to conceive.

Mr. Felton, with three of the other gentlemen, impatient at being detained at the quarantine ground, had embraced the opportunity offered by a passing steamer, of proceeding to the city before us; and, having made arrangements for our accommodation, was waiting to receive us. Those will sympathize with my feelings, on first setting foot on dry land, who, like myself, have endured five weeks confinement in a ship; which is indeed, nothing more than a floating prison, differing only from a stationary one, in the probable event of a general jail delivery by drowning.

Arrived at length and safely debarked, we soon found ourselves installed as inmates of a genteel boarding-house, at the upper end of Beekman-street, near the City Hall. On entering, I was a little surprized at the appearance of the rooms—being much better furnished, and presenting altogether a nobler air than I expected to find assumed by a mere boarding-house, in this far-away country. After we had forwarded our letters and refreshed ourselves, we retired to a comfortable bed room on dry land; rendered doubly grateful, after the tempestuous tossings of the ocean, and the fatigue produced by this day of excitement.

The next morning we all arose early, and with glowing expectations, set forward to perambulate the city. What strange sensations affect the mind of a stranger, on first entering a foreign city—what an air of novelty every thing appears to wear that the eye can rest upon! Every trifle attracts attention, and our desires for information appear as if they could never be gratified.

Ⓒ This city of New York certainly is a noble place ; it is divided into fourteen wards, and contains about three hundred thousand inhabitants. The houses are chiefly of red brick, and altogether its internal appearance fully justified the impressions produced by the outline of the previous night.

Broadway, as the principal street is called, is the leading feature, in point of position and fashionable attraction ; it runs in a direct line, from south to north, through the heart of the city ; and is, I believe, about five miles and a half in length : its southern extremity communicates with a fine promenade, leading to the south battery. This fort is situated at the southern extremity of the city, just at the termination of Manhattan Island, and at the point of confluence of the East and Hudson

Rivers. Its position, as a place of pleasurable resort, is delightful ; and from its commanding situation, it must when required, form an excellent post of defence. Long may it continue to be the resort of the votaries of pleasure, rather than the theatre of military glory.

Broadway is the fashionable lounge for all the black and white belles and beaux of the city ; its commodious and extensive *pave*, completely covered with neat awnings, forms as agreeable a promenade, as is to be found, perhaps, in any city in the world. Many a transatlantic poet has endeavoured to immortalize this noble walk, and its glittering pedestrians ; but no one has succeeded in prevailing upon Pegasus to use the *trottoir* of Broadway.

Nearly parallel with Broadway, are several other streets, and these again are connected with others, which intersect them at right angles. The relative position of the streets in the old, or southern part of the city, is somewhat confused, but nothing can exceed the regularity with which the upper part is disposed, as a reference to the plan will sufficiently testify. *Straightness*



is here the prevailing feature, which, while it preserves the uniformity entire, never displays street architecture so advantageously as the fine sweeping curve.

About a mile up Broadway, is the Park. This is a small enclosure of a few acres, encircled with an iron railing, divided into walks, planted with trees, furnished with seats, and made, every way as agreeable as it is possible to make a small oasis of verdure, situated in the centre of a populous city. At the upper end of the Park, stands the pride of New York—the City Hall. It is a fine marble structure certainly, but it did not strike me as possessing that magnificent appearance that I expected, from a building composed entirely of marble. But tastes differ. One of our company on this occasion, related an anecdote of an Irish gentleman, whom he had conducted round the city. After surveying several of the public buildings and many streets presenting architectural attractions, all of which the Irishman had dismissed in succession with this remark, “Very good indeed, but not like Dublin,”—he was suddenly brought within full view of the City Hall. The Hibernian appeared

struck with astonishment, and unguardedly exclaimed, "But was this built here?"

There are several buildings of white marble in various parts of the city; some also of brick, handsomely faced with Jersey free-stone, which present a very genteel and substantial appearance. [The air of newness pervading the whole city, never fails to arrest the attention of the stranger and excite admiration. Indeed, the whole of the buildings present so clean an exterior, that they seem as if just finished. This is accounted for by the absence of coal smoke, that impartial enemy to architectural beauty, in the "old country," as they here term England.]

Coal is here only burned by the opulent, and although fashion has declared in favour of its use, yet wood is the chief, and indeed, almost the only fuel consumed here; it is certainly much healthier and cleaner, than its sable substitute, but the matter of dollars and cents has its share of influence.

The number of superb houses is very great: though, it must be confessed that, like the streets, their uniformity greatly detracts from the effect they

would produce under other circumstances. They appear all to be built upon one plan; the chief feature of which is, that the dining and drawing rooms are situated on the lower floor, and so arranged, as by throwing open a large pair of folding doors, to form one splendid apartment. Their furniture is magnificent in the extreme. In this, as well as all other household embellishments, the natives pride themselves; and certainly, they succeed to admiration in their attempts to produce a brilliant effect.

The buildings for the celebration of public worship, are generally denominated "churches;" I conceive this uniformity of designation is caused by the absence of an established religion. St. Paul's, in Broadway, a Protestant episcopal church, is the principal ecclesiastical edifice in the city. It is a plain modern structure composed of free-stone, with a steeple of the same material; the east end is ornamented by a colonnade, supporting a pediment, with a statue of St. Paul. The whole is well disposed, and produces an agreeable effect; but the interior is merely plain and neat, without any pretension whatever to splendour. This church

has the advantage of a burial ground, a convenience by no means general throughout the city.

All the other churches are composed of either brick or red granite, and appear to be erected without any design whatever to add to the beauty of the city. There are neither domes nor towers; the steeples are by no means lofty, and from the elevation of the surrounding dwellings, they seem lower than they are in reality. Each of these erections shelters one bell, or at most two; and when all these are in united operation on a Sunday morning, the universal clanking may be conceived to be any thing but harmonious.

Almost every sect and denomination of religion has its temple and its supporters; but it must be conceded, that the most respectable part of the citizens attend the Protestant episcopal churches; and the proportion in this city, is acknowledged to correspond with that of the larger towns in England.

There are two principal theatres, the Park and the Bowery; besides a number of minor ones, continually springing up and declining. The blacks, who are never behind in rivalling their superiors,

contrive to keep open one, and sometimes two theatres; where the popular characters of Lady Macbeth, Juliet, the *fair* Desdemona, and others, are all some way sustained by the sable sisterhood. A lively inmate of our boarding-house, amused us one morning at breakfast, with an account of his last night's entertainment at the black theatre, where a sable "Richard" was the point of attraction. In order to please his audience, the crooked-backed monarch politely accommodated his language to the meridian of the place: whenever the word "York" occurred, he invariably altered the text, and called it "New York!"—the "house of New York," &c. In this instance, the ladies were personated by negresses!

Rents are here much higher than in London. On investigation, I suppose, the value of building ground in the lower part of this city, would be exceeded in price, by no area of equal dimensions in England—perhaps not in the world. The whole of the mercantile business is transacted in that part of the city, which lies below the Park. On inspecting the plan, the reader will perceive, that the only direction in which land can be obtained, is

upwards, that is to the north : and as this is allowed by men of business, to be out of the market, the merchant must either have his offices below the City Hall, or be altogether excluded. The value of land in this section, being exorbitantly increased by competition, and the desire of all who have business to transact, to be as near the market as possible joined to the scarcity of room, unitedly combine to raise the price of land to an extravagant height in every part of the city.

It is considered probable, that New York will at some future period, cover the whole of Manhattan Island. The village of Brooklyn, on the opposite coast of Long Island, and Jersey City, on the western bank of the Hudson, are also becoming very populous from their proximity to this grand market of the Union. A well regulated communication by steam is kept up with these two outports of commerce ; a boat starts for the former every three minutes, and for the latter, every ten minutes during the day.

New York is, beyond dispute, the first commercial city in the New World, and receives into its ports, vessels laden with the produce and manufactures of every quarter of the globe. But the retail

department of trade is here conducted in a slovenly and a most irregular manner. It is advisable for the buyer to be acquainted with the value of the article he intends to purchase, before he closes his bargain ; or he will run the risk of paying a penalty proportionable to his ignorance.

Auction sales are here numerous beyond conception. Hence that part of the inhabitants having family establishments, and other extensive consumers, supply themselves from these, as frequently as possible. These sales are effected in the lower part of the city ; and a red banner displayed, serves as an *insigne* of an auction sale in this city, as a spear answered the same purpose in ancient Rome.

It is true, that goods sold in this manner, are disposed of in very large quantities, as sales on this principle are expected to be frequented only by shop-keepers ; but this difficulty is frequently obviated, by a few families uniting and entering into a reciprocal engagement, to make purchases as opportunities occur, of certain articles agreed upon, on account of the compact. The high prices demanded in the shops, almost compel the public to resort to this expedient in self defence.

Some few however, make very odd kind of bargains. I remember one of our friends, a young gentleman, purchasing at an auction three hundred fans ! This reminded me of Moses, in the "Vicar of Wakefield," and the gross of green spectacles. but simplicity is far from being fashionable in this part of the world, and poor Moses would have stood no better chance here, than in the hands of Ephraim Jenkinson.

There are, nevertheless, a vast number of good shops, and without doubt many are substantial and highly respectable ; but still, I never could heartily admire their system of transacting business ; it required an Englishwoman to be so provokingly cautious and suspicious, if she wished to prevent the Yankees from being "too smart" for her. A term they use triumphantly on every fresh display of low trickery.

Perhaps there are not, proportionably, a greater number of sharpers here than in London ; but there is certainly a marked difference in their treatment. The smile of approbation bestowed upon a clever villain, when relating his witty rogueries, is shockingly misplaced ; and in my opinion, evinces a



species of moral cowardice. A severe castigation would serve the interests of society much more effectually. Indeed, it were better to lead the life of an anchorite at once, than to associate with such characters as I have seen admitted into the company of merchants, judges, and professional men. But, alas! the convenient excuse of "business purposes," too often serves as a mantle to cover, if it cannot hide, a multitude of sins.

To my great surprise, on the other hand, I found the crime of smuggling held in utter abhorrence. I rejoice at this, and from all I observed, I think it would be exceedingly difficult to find an American that could be prevailed upon to engage in a smuggling transaction of ever so trivial a nature. To cheat "Uncle Sam," as they term their government, is with them, a crime paramount! And they never fail to treat those foreigners with ineffable contempt, who are so perfidious as to defraud their own governments. I have heard instances of some of our British sharp fellows being sadly taken by surprise, through ignorance of this peculiarity of the national character.

Without hesitation, I allow that every species

of villainy ought to meet with the unmitigated condemnation of all just men. The question then naturally arises: How is it that these who regard roguery with such indifference, when practised on private individuals—nay, smile with approbation, if the transaction be associated with any thing witty—should single out the vice of smuggling, as the only one that deserves exclusive reprobation? I leave the question open; but the general opinion is, that as this crime is regarded by far too many on this side the Atlantic, as a venial offence, it is placed on the criminal code of “Uncle Sam,” through a pure love of opposition.

This appellation, “Uncle Sam,” is willingly acknowledged as the national nick-name of the “free-born citizens of the United States,” while on the other hand, the terms, “Brother Jonathan” and “Yankee,” are considered highly offensive. As the origin of this favoured term is not generally known in England, I beg leave to insert a verbatim copy from an American newspaper, of the baptism of this independent personage, together with a description of his sponsors.

“Immediately after the declaration of the last war

with England, Elbert Anderson, Esq. of this city, then a contractor, visited Troy, on the Hudson, where was concentrated, and where he purchased a large quantity of provisions—beef, pork, &c. The inspectors of these articles at that place were Messrs. Ebenezer and Samuel Wilson. The latter gentleman (invariably known as “*Uncle Sam*”) generally superintended in person a large number of workmen, who, on this occasion, were employed in overhauling the provisions purchased by the contractor for the army. The casks were marked E. A.—U. S. This work fell to the lot of a facetious fellow in the employ of the Messrs. Wilsons, who, on being asked by some of his fellow workmen the meaning of the mark (for the letters U. S. for United States were almost then entirely new to them,) said, “he did not know, unless it meant *Elbert Anderson* and *Uncle Sam*”—alluding exclusively, then, to the said “*Uncle Sam*” Wilson. The joke took among the workmen, and passed currently; and “*Uncle Sam*” himself being present, was occasionally rallied by them on the increasing extent of his possessions. Many of these workmen being of a character denominated “food for powder,” were found shortly after following the recruiting drum, and pushing toward the frontier lines, for the double purpose of meeting the enemy, and of eating the provisions they had lately laboured to put in good order. Their old jokes of course accompanied them, and before the first campaign ended, this identical one first appeared in

print—it gained favour rapidly, till it penetrated and was recognised in every part of our country, and will, no doubt continue so long as U. S. remains a nation. It originated precisely as above stated ; and the writer of this article distinctly recollects remarking, at the time when it first appeared in print, to a person who was equally aware of its origin, how odd it would be, should this silly joke, originating in the midst of beef, pork, pickle, mud, salt, and hoop-poles, eventually become a national cognomen.”

Besides the little information this long noisy paragraph conveys, it will serve as a fair specimen of the loose and rambling style of their literature, which their oratory somewhat resembles.

When a foreigner decides upon remaining in the United States, and wishes to be naturalized, he first “ declares his intentions ;” that is, he has his name enrolled in the national records, and receives documents, which will, at the expiration of five years, if he reside in the States during that period, entitle him to the full privileges of a native. The expences of this affair amounts to more than five dollars.

{The immense number of emigrants invests the city with the appearance of a miscellaneous specimen

of human beings, from all quarters of the world ; yet there is a sufficient majority of native inhabitants fully to establish a nationality of character. By the best information I could obtain, one-fourth of the city are natives of Ireland ; and, I think, that all other foreigners may be comprised in one-sixth of the remainder : these, with 50,000 negroes, taken from the gross population returns, will leave about 125,000 native citizens. This may be about a correct estimate ; but it is really a very difficult question to answer correctly, the statistical accounts are so much at variance. ]

[Generally speaking, the Irish meet with a much better reception than the English. So indeed, do all other foreigners ; for the natives bear a kind of family grudge against John Bull, and it has long been fashionable, for many to evince their patriotism, by discharging their resentment on the English, whom they consider as being more especially his legitimate offspring. ]

## CHAPTER III.

RESIDENCE IN NEW YORK.—FIRES.—NEGROES.—

BOARDING HOUSES.—DRESS.

Fires are here alarmingly numerous, and frequently of unprecedented magnitude. The firemen are a body of volunteers, amounting to between three and four hundred. They are viewed by their fellow citizens, as a class of respectable men; and as occupying a station, somewhat similar to our local cavalry. They spend their time in the execution of their arduous duties, and supply their own clothes, without receiving any remuneration, except the municipal privileges with which they are rewarded at the completion of their septennial term of servitude. I endeavoured to discover, if possible, what was the chief cause of these fires; but could arrive at no positive conclusion on the subject. I conceive the half smoked cigars, so plentifully disseminated in every direction, by men and boys of all ages, conditions, and colours, may be one

reason; and I know of no other, unless it be the carelessness naturally produced by the eternal use of the spirit decanter.

The rates and premiums of Insurance companies are perhaps higher here than in any other part of the world; yet, in consequence of the numerous demands made upon them, these public bodies are continually failing. Custom reconciles us to all things; and fires are here so common, that these good citizens have no idea of the sensations such calamities produce with us. I remember an English gentleman venturing to state in public company, that in a large market town near the place of his birth, he only recollected one fire occurring in the space of above twenty years. Although I have no doubt of the truth of this assertion, yet it was received by those present, with marks of suspicion so glaringly evident, that I felt sorry that he had hazarded his credit for veracity, without calculating upon the chances against producing proof.

Strange as it may appear, during our residence in New York and in the country, I never heard any well authenticated case of death, occasioned by any of these fires: although first, from motives

of humanity, and afterwards, from curiosity, we constantly subjected this matter to a very close investigation. This appeared to me the more astonishing, because it is well known that in Europe, loss of life is too frequently the melancholy concomitant of these awful visitations.

I noticed some of their many fire engines; they are very handsome, and very, very small. They are universally acknowledged to be more powerful than ours. Indeed, the good citizens are very loud in their praises, and claim the honour of some inventions or improvements connected with them; and I will not pluck a single leaf or acorn from their civic crown, for which they pay so dearly, but will cheerfully acknowledge, that their engines are kept in better condition than any other in the world.

They have hit upon a very ingenious device to direct the firemen to that part of the city, where their assistance is required. Those who first give the alarm hasten to the City Hall, whose site occupies the highest ground in the city. The heavy alarm bell is instantly rung, and its sound is re-



retained on his plantation in a state of vassalage, and dying left them so!!

It is with no feelings of pleasure that I drag the crimes of this atrocious wretch before the public; but, I believe this fact is not known in England, and it may serve to give some idea of the charming things that are transacted in those regions of slavery, where both the framer and the violator of the law are found united in the person of the planter. Surely it may here be said, that licentiousness and tyranny have met together; democracy and slavery have kissed each other.

The existing slavery of these "free and independent" States, combined with the atrocious conduct of Jefferson, the progenitor of whole gangs of slaves, forms a beautiful comment on his favourite apothegm—

"All men are born free and equal."

An expression which declares precisely the same doctrine, occupies a prominent position in their national manifesto; the famous declaration of Independence.

The projectors of this their *magna charta*, must have known, that this motto is founded on a

fallacious basis, and will not endure the touchstone of common sense, particularly when applied to natal circumstances. Were the base-born progeny of that "illustrious champion of liberty," Jefferson, born *free* and endowed with privileges and advantages *equal* to the children of his amiable contemporary, Hamilton? Or are the sons of those slaves who now groan in fetters, in the southern states of this "land of liberty," born *free* and invested with *equal* rights to the children of those Molochs, their masters? A common understanding revolts at the comparison. Away with such sophistry to the dark dominions of that being whence it emanated!

I regard this, not in a political point of view, but purely as a case of Liberty and Equality, *versus* Negro Slavery and Oppression. And were it not for the sake of humanity, I should have regarded the whole affair with indifference, and left the Americans to shout praises to the goddess of Liberty, with as much clamour as did the Ephesians of old, to their good customer the goddess Diana.

\* General Hamilton, a man much esteemed for his virtues.

This despised class, the Negroes, seem to be regarded as being destitute, not only of mental endowments, but also of the sensibilities of our common nature. They are considered as fair subjects for the bitterest sarcasm and contempt. Children, catching the contagion of example by sympathy, regard them as beings that may be annoyed and insulted with impunity ; dogs are encouraged to bark at them ; and as a crowning point, parrots are trained to curse them. I could scarcely have believed this, but I know one elegant house, where a bird of this kind was much admired for the charming accomplishment of thundering a degrading curse at the head of every passing negro.

Besides their intellectual deficiencies, they are charged with a long catalogue of moral misdoings, which more properly spring from a neglected education than a depraved disposition. I have frequently conversed with the females, and have always found them remarkably civil, and grateful for any trivial act of kindness. They generally express themselves in good language, and with an enunciation, as bold and as clear as any Englishman. This struck me with surprise, as I had formed my

judgement of their conversational capabilities, from the dialogues given in broken English, that I had met with in the course of my reading. Their voices are rich and melodious, and their singing is much admired at church, but all those that I ever saw there, sat by themselves; and I never heard of a white man, however low in station he might be, that would condescend to sit at the same table with a black.

There is something peculiarly interesting in the appearance of their children, when between the ages of three and eight. I know not by what laws blackness of skin and sinuosity of hair should, when associated, produce an effect at once droll and agreeable. But such is the case in an uncommon degree. All European ladies, with whom I conversed, acknowledged this; and even the Americans were compelled to allow, that these sable Psyches and Cupids of the kitchen were very amusing.

But I soon found, that to converse in accents of kindness with negroes, was not the way to secure the estimation of American society; it is considered shockingly coarse and vulgar. On some occasions, the negro children themselves have stood in mute

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effectually represent the piebald character of their Republic.

Let this device be, the representation of a man wearing the cap of liberty, and holding a slave whip in his right hand, while his left displays the *Declaration of Independence*; his right foot, at the same time, resting on the naked back of a prostrate negro.—With this motto :

“ All men are born free and equal.”

Negro slavery is the foulest blot on the character of the American government, and their spiteful treatment of those who have obtained their freedom, represents the “free borns” in a most ungracious point of view. It justifies a stranger in concluding, that the strong arm of compulsion has wrested these oppressed creatures from their iron grasp; and that, like the Egyptians of old, their bond slaves have departed much against their will. What! are these blacks indebted to their neighbours, and is it for the purpose of obtaining satisfaction, that all classes unite in heaping reproaches on their heads? Truth compels me to declare, that the christian whites owe to their sable brethren a debt that they can never, never liquidate; and those who have laboured to

astonishment, while I have patted the head of one of their companions ; and such an action has sometimes produced a remark, on the strange taste that could induce a lady to take notice of *such creatures*.

A fracas took place one day, at our boarding-house, arising out of a dispute between two gentlemen ; the one a German, and the other an American. In the heat of argument, the German expressed himself thus : “I will wager a hundred dollars, that I produce a negro that is a better calculator than you.”—The American rose in high anger, and immediately left the room ; declaring that he would not sit at the same table with any one, who esteemed him no better than a negro. Indeed he carried his threat further, for he removed to another house with all possible precipitation. The general opinion was, that the proposal of the German was a most degrading one ; and I doubt not, a more fashionable method of resentment would have met with unequivocal approbation.

Until the Americans consent entirely to loose the yoke and let the oppressed go free, they should cashier the stars and stripes, and adopt the following device and motto, which would more

effectually represent the piebald character of their Republic.

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rivet their galling fetters, will answer for it in that day, when some from among the most abject negroes in the States, shall shine in the splendour of coronation garments.

But a haughty spirit of contemptuousness seems to prevail among those, in whose breasts dulness and ill nature are predominant. Thus the Americans of this order, despise the English; the resident English despise the Irish; the Irish unite with all the rest in despising the Negroes: whom these despise I cannot tell, but probably all the rest together.

A magnanimous mind will seek out no excuse for treating the defenceless with cruel contempt; and, while I freely admit the vanity of these negroes is boundless, I contend that it is not to be cured by an indiscriminate administration of ill treatment. Their advance in civilization will be marked by a corresponding contempt for these frivolities, which they now so much admire, and no doubt, they will ultimately lay them aside.

A peep into a negro ball room, as at present conducted, would certainly provoke the risibility of a philosopher. I myself, was never so highly

favoured, but shall present my readers with a description, as nearly as I can recollect it, given by a gentleman, just observing from what I have seen of their mode of dressing on occasions of festivity, that I believe the representation to be correct.—“Dark dandies, so starched and stayed as to appear perfectly inflexible, dressed in the very tip of fashion, with their poor heads beaming with all the lustre that Rowland’s Macassar can dispense, may here be seen paying their devoirs to their sable belles. These, arrayed in fashionables fresh from France: the articles of dress themselves preposterous, and ill adapted to display the *attractions* of the wearers, by their tasteless combination, magnify the absurdity ten-fold. Here, some nymph, assuming the name of Thalia or Aurora, may be observed, with fingers, ears, and wrists, ringed and jeweled with a sample of all the tinsel trumpery of Birmingham; on her head waves a huge plume of *white* ostrich feathers; while her dark ancles are dimly visible through a pair of *British flesh-coloured* silk stockings; and her waist so tightly compressed, as to give her figure the contour of an hour-glass.”—Poor creatures! they will some day know better—till then, these things

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may be regarded with the passing tribute of a smile.

Respecting this treatment of negroes, by their former owners, the whites of America, I desire to be understood as speaking in general terms. Some, I know, have kind masters, but all general rules admit of individual exceptions. That negro enjoys a great advantage, who lives under kind superiors; but, if his race be held in contempt by the whole neighbourhood, he has still the mortifying consciousness of knowing that he will be obnoxious to indignity and insult, so long as he retains his colour.

The greater part of the negroes are servants still. Those of them that are steady receive excellent wages—from eight to twelve dollars per month, with board, for a man; and from six to ten for a woman. Those who are not in service, chiefly wander about the city carrying their convenient apparatus for sawing wood for fuel, and, as they are seldom employed for a longer period than two hours together, this is an idle kind of life. Although they are the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the whole community, they are not generally overworked. Under existing circumstances, they are

not likely to rise in the scale of society : I did not notice a negro among the hundreds of carmen, employed in this city.

This numerous class, the carmen, keep each a horse and cart, which they own and drive ; and, as the merchants keep neither horses nor vehicles, they do all the commercial transportation work in the city. They are not hired by any particular employer, for any specified time, but like hackney coachmen with us, are called when required. Their carts are much lighter than ours ; and with the assistance of four movable posts and a chain, they contrive to dispense with both sides and ends. Their horses are generally very good ; they appear as light, and when occasion requires, move as swiftly as our coach horses.

The heavier kind of goods are usually deposed in smaller packages, and the whole of the business equipage seems, to my judgement, much lighter and more convenient than with us. Their porters, carmen, and helpers of all kinds move with greater alacrity ; and, although I admit I am not a competent judge in such matters, I consider the Americans surpass us in these affairs.

The vessels of all descriptions appear much cleaner and handsomer than those of ours; and this superiority is maintained through all classes, from a Liverpool Packet to a Long Island market boat. A Yankee vessel, see her where you may, can be told among a thousand others; she lies upon the water like a swan, and in the midst of shipping from all nations, she appears like a swallow among other birds.

Their steam ships are also very large, and most beautifully fitted up and furnished. But now a passage across the Atlantic may be effected by steam, the naval affairs of the whole world will, perhaps, undergo a complete revolution: yet this would be more speedily effected, were the steam apparatus perfectly free from danger.

The city is well supplied with provisions of every kind. On a fair average, they are about half the price that they are with us; though the markets here are subject to considerable fluctuations. They are procured every morning from the city markets; the two principal of which are the Washington and the Fulton; and these are again supplied most plentifully, from the country,

with every thing the land produces in all parts of the Union : together with fish, in the greatest perfection and abundance.


During the winter, the inhabitants providentially secure a good supply of ice for summer use. Insignificant as this article may appear to us who seldom use it, even as a luxury ; it is an object of paramount importance in a city, where the thermometer ranges for four months in the year, between eighty and a hundred degrees. During this broiling season, neither meat, fish, poultry, milk, nor butter, could be preserved without its cooling influence ; and as a luxury at such a season, it is grateful beyond conception.

One of the principal causes of domestic disquietude in this part of the world, arises from servants. Whether this be the result of the peculiar form of the American government or not, I pretend not to determine ; but most certainly, the saying of Jefferson is as well known by this class as their own proper names, by some of them it is as frequently repeated, and is taken advantage of by all. If a lady requires a servant, she usually makes her wants known at one of the many register offices that



abound in the city ; or she sends an advertisement to the newspaper office, which will be inserted for an English shilling. In either case, she is sure of having a numerous assemblage, from which she can make a selection. \ The applicants will seem innumerable, comprising individuals of almost every nation under heaven, but chiefly from Ireland : and it will be a wonder, if any one among them have lived in her last place more than a month. As to character, the whole affair generally proves a farce. I myself, could never obtain any thing more than a mere outline. ]

] I cannot well conceive how servants can be more fickle than they are here. Their love of liberty prompts them to change their places, almost as frequently as they change their dresses ; and as to equality, they always demand a seat at the same table with the heads of the family, in the country ; and in many instances, in the city. ] Seldom indeed, can a girl be prevailed upon to remain on the premises after tea time ; for, as her mistress spends the evening out whenever *she* pleases, the girl thinks she cannot do better than imitate her example. But the latter frequently forgets to return at the

time appointed, and the worst of it is, want of punctuality arising from this cause, is not always the greatest annoyance. But, I forget myself—servants they will not submit to be called; this term is especially resisted by the free-born sisterhood; they are, therefore, denominated *helps*, *helpers*, or *hands*. 

So much for a single servant; and a plurality is sure to increase the perplexity. I was frequently reminded of that saying of old Elwes, “If you keep one servant, your work is done; if you keep two, it is half done; if three are kept, you may do it yourself.” Yet, the first section of this aphorism does not correctly apply here; for the work of a mistress is never completely done here, by either one servant or more, and must in many parts for ever go undone, unless she do it herself.

The perplexity arising from servants, has influenced many small families to prefer residing from year to year, in a boarding-house. Although this custom appears very singular at first, as do all domestic arrangements with which we are unacquainted; yet I must confess, it has its recommendations, and upon the whole, I liked it as well as

occupying a house of my own. As our apartments in Beekman-street were not, in all respects, suited to our convenience, we removed to a boarding-house situated in the immediate vicinity of Broadway, where we were provided with permanent accommodation; and remained here during our continuance in the city. The inmates of the house have, of course, their own sleeping rooms; and these, according to the number of the party, or the kind of accommodation desired. The whole company, with the exception of the children, assemble in the public room at meal times; besides which, there is a public sitting room; and, should a private apartment be required for any temporary purpose, it can always be obtained in an establishment of any pretensions.

The order of the house is (for in describing one I describe all,) to breakfast in summer at eight; dine at two; and take tea at six. The breakfast table is furnished with tea, coffee, and chocolate, besides viands of various kinds, both hot and cold, and also with fish and fruit when in season. Dinner presents nothing remarkable; the table is supplied with much about the same fare as with us, only with a little more attention to variety. Tea is the last

repast, and a massive one it is. Besides tea and coffee, and a second edition of the substantial cold fare that figured at the breakfast table, there are sweetmeats and preserves in every variety, with a countless display of cakes, the very naming of which would appear upon paper like a confectioner's catalogue; while melons, or pine apples, when in season, bring up the rear. After this, what more is required?—Being accustomed to take supper in Europe we fancied we required it here, and were accommodated, but as we found we were the only party who partook of that meal, we felt somewhat uncomfortable, and learned in course of time to adopt the custom of our neighbours, which we found by experience, in this respect to be preferable to our own.

The quality of the fare provided is usually of the very best. I have often thought that the Americans, as a nation, sacrifice the pleasures of intellectual taste to mere animal gratification; and notwithstanding the variety displayed at their repasts, I found it difficult to make a selection of food sufficiently plain for myself and my children. They rally us on our partiality for the pleasures of the

table, and we receive it with hearty good nature ; but really the national joke of the roast beef of old England, comes with very bad grace from transatlantic epicures. Like all other establishments, boarding houses are various in character. They differ very little from each other in the fare they provide, but the description of the house, and the terms, are considered a just criterion of the circumstances and quality of the company they entertain. The terms are of every variety from three dollars per week, to—I know not what sum. My husband and myself paid a hundred dollars per month ; in this sum I have not included any thing connected with the children. Perhaps, some may think the mention of this an unnecessary display of personality. My reason for it is this. I have so often heard individuals, who have written on America, charged with associating with the *canaile* of the nation ; and their testimony, on this assumption has been rejected by numbers, that in order to rebut this anticipated charge I have furnished the reader with an acknowledged standard in order to assist him in the formation of his judgement.

Besides ourselves, the inmates of this establish-

ment consisted of two married pairs, a brother and sister, and two single gentlemen: the gentlemen were all either professional men or merchants. Frequently the company was diversified, by the introduction of a lady or gentleman from Virginia, or from some other of the southern states, who had taken a trip hither, for the purpose of avoiding the excessive heat at home; and sometimes two ladies would drop down the Hudson from the north for a few week's pleasure. Some one of the gentlemen also, would occasionally introduce a friend fresh from the other side of the Atlantic; so that, it was no uncommon occurrence for us to converse, on the same day, with individuals from many different parts of the globe.

After breakfast, we used to withdraw to the sitting-room, and either read or work with the needle; or, if more agreeable, we could retire to our private apartments. We could spend our time either privately or in public, according to our inclinations; and with agreeable society, for ours was remarkably so, what could be more desirable? But what became of the children? will be a natural question. These were no source of annoyance—

they were sent to school, or attended in the nursery, or, if of sufficient age, were admitted into the sitting-room. That woman is not worthy of the name of either wife or mother, in whose vocabulary the word 'trouble' has a place, when the comfort of her husband or her children is the object.

So small a portion of the time being occupied in affair of a domestic nature, leaves the ladies leisure for reading, and the construction of elaborate articles of fancy dress. Their fashions are imported from Paris, which however, do not at all times appear to become them; but here as in England, any absurdity has its charms, that is countenanced by the recommendation of a French milliner. The gentlemen dress after the English style, and plates of the newest London fashions, are displayed in the shop windows of every tailor in New York.

The Americans are commonly charged with eating with voracious avidity. I know this to be strictly true with some; but the charge does not apply, in all its disgusting details, against the members of, what is considered, good society. The first exhibition I witnessed of this national peculiarity was on a steam-ship tour; until then I had not even

heard of it. It is most true, they do not indulge in conversation while dining; and this, not only detracts from that sociability, which at all times graces an English repast; but it also throws a sombre shade over the whole affair.

Nothing can exceed the abhorrence with which European ladies view the disgusting practices I now feel myself called upon to mention. The disagreeable creatures, almost to a man, chew tobacco and spit most incessantly. These odious practices are too universal to admit of any palliation from individual exceptions. What pleasure can the things—wretches I was going to write, find in this loathsome practice? It unfits them for the society even of those females, who have the lowest claims to respectability—it injures their health—it makes them hateful and hated go where they may;—and I could almost wish for the supremacy of the Pope, to predominate in America for the sole purpose of carrying into effect the edict of Urban VII. against the use of tobacco.

It is painful to my feelings to dwell on these things, but having tied the above foul practices together, and dismissed them with the thunders of



the Vatican, it would be unfair to let the master vice of the nation escape, without a sentence of disapprobation ; I mean the drinking of ardent spirits. I will not call it the vice of drunkenness, for all I could learn inclines me to question the capability of the gentlemen of the Union to commit this sin. As a nation, they are brought up from their very infancy to drink ardent spirits, and by the time they arrive at years of maturity they become so habituated to the practice, that spirits cease to affect them in a manner similar to others. Who can sufficiently estimate the blessings that flow from cheap rum ? I have witnessed infants washed in it—being attainable by all, boys have been known to enter school under its influence—and it has slain its thousands in the prime of manhood.

That temperance societies have improved these things, I cheerfully admit ; for the practice had produced effects so appalling, that even the depraved shuddered to contemplate them. But still the use of the solitary dram is not banished, even from among the higher orders of the community.

These *evil spirits* are here made to assume all the attractions that a depraved ingenuity, guided by

avarice, can possibly invent. The taste is consulted either by bitter, sweet, or acid, or by a pleasing combination of all. If the weather be cold, spices are in request; if hot, ice is introduced to impart a grateful coolness.

I would by no means advise any young man whether ignorant or educated, who has the least relish for these things, to cross the Atlantic; for, I consider if he have only the slightest inclination for them here, his life is not worth four years purchase, from the day he sets foot on the coast of America. In the short space of two years, how many have I known and heard of, who, by this destructive vice, have been cut off in the flower of their days! The absent friends of such seldom know the real cause of their death; and consumption, or some other disorder, frequently serves as the mantle to cover the horrid aspect of the *familiar spirit* they have consulted, as a similar vesture veiled the shade of the reputed prophet.\*

\* 1 Sam., xxviii., 14.

## CHAPTER IV.

## VOYAGE UP THE HUDSON.—NEW ENGLAND

## SABBATH DAY RACE.

Throughout the preceding chapters, I have considered our voyage across the Atlantic, only in the light of a successful speculation; and so indeed it was in all points but one; but that *one* was unfortunately of the utmost importance—I mean HEALTH. My family had enjoyed this blessing almost without alloy, in all our previous travels, and this circumstance, perhaps, rendered us a little impatient under the infliction of the first reverse.

After we had remained in the city a few months, Mr. Felton was attacked with a disorder that frequently rages here, called the chills and fever; one distressing peculiarity of which is, that it leaves the patient for a long time in a weak and languid condition. This was to us a circumstance of a serious nature, for as all our earthly dependence

was founded upon his exertions, as a private teacher ; if he were incapacitated by sickness from pursuing the duties of his profession—it required no augur to foretel the consequences. But as in other affairs, America had not only answered, but had greatly exceeded our expectations, we felt every disposition to give the climate a fair trial before we totally abandoned it.

As soon as my husband was sufficiently convalescent, we amused ourselves with visiting Staten Island, Long Island, the coast of New Jersey, and other places within a convenient distance of the city, for the advantage of change of scene and air ; and also to select a country residence, with the view of ascertaining the effect of the climate, under what we conceived to be, the most advantageous circumstances. The chief of these excursions of pleasure was our trip to Albany, the State Capital of New York, situated about a hundred and fifty miles up the Hudson, or the North River, as it is here generally denominated.

Since I had been in America, I had heard, with perfect indifference, the scenery of the Hudson whispered in accents of faint praise ; and as I expec-

ted to see nothing more than a fine river winding its course through a forest, I was totally unprepared for the pleasure that awaited me. It is not without some faint misgivings, arising from a latent sense of insufficiency for such a task, that I hazard an attempt to describe this charming scenery.

Embarked on board a superb steam ship, we went at a quick rate, and quickly left the city in the distance. A long series of perpendicular rocks, of various altitudes, crowned with trees and bushes, and fluted as if by art, forms the western barrier of this noble river; on the other side, the mansions of the opulent, with their pleasure grounds, reflect a beauteous contrast. We now leave the dwellings of man, and the wildness of nature seems to usurp uninterrupted sway; when suddenly the river widens into what appears to be an expansive lake, whose glassy bosom reflects the surrounding woods and rocks, and the tree-bearing islets which it encircles. Again the stream is contracted by two gigantic rocks, which lift their 'awful form' from each side of its margin. We dart through this channel, and another expansive prospect opens to our view, enriched with all the charms of the former, in

addition to the blue mountains of Catskill in perspective. Here it seems as if nature had studied to dispose woods, rocks, mountains, streams, and lakes, in positions the most graceful and majestic; so sublime and lovely are the objects that meet the eye in every direction.

Besides nature's attractions other pleasing circumstances are associated with the surrounding scenery. About forty miles above the city, is the memorable district called the *neutral ground*, on the borders of which the struggle was the fiercest during the revolutionary war. This is the province that Cooper has chosen for the scenes of his 'Spy.' <sup>Cooper's</sup> Here also is the melancholy spot where the unfortunate Major Andre was captured, and the place of his execution may be seen from the river. 'Sleepy Hollow' was also pointed out to us, and farther on is the village of Rip Van Winkle of somniferous notoriety. Among these the rock of Sing Sing, <sup>the</sup> crowned with the dismal ornament of the largest prison in the world, forces itself upon our notice, and induces a feeling dashed with rather too much sadness to be strictly pleasing.

Before this sail up the Hudson,<sup>5</sup> I conceived nothing could exceed the beauties of the Isle of Wight, and some choice scenes on the lakes of Scotland; but all these must certainly yield the palm to the scenery of the Hudson. To be fully appreciated it must be seen. The surrounding objects, indeed, may be named upon paper, but who can faithfully describe the atmosphere !

The established regulations on board the steam ships, oblige the gentlemen to occupy the fore cabin, and leave the ladies in uninterrupted possession of the after one. We had therefore, no gentlemen in our company, except when on deck. Although this division of the sexes may be viewed with reluctance at first, by those who have husbands and brothers on board ; yet ladies are generally reconciled to the arrangement, because they are secure from the multitudinous annoyances, produced by the free consumption of spirits and tobacco. However, the ladies and gentlemen dine together, and on the present occasion, the company amounted to above two hundred. The same scenes variously affect different persons, and this was the first time in my life that I had dined with so large and so heterogeneous an

assemblage. I felt much annoyed by hearing the rough phrases bandied about among the *gentlemen*, while taking possession of their places. Soon, however, the dinner appeared, and the company commenced operations in earnest. Although but few words were spoken, it was by no means a silent repast; dispatch was the order of the day—I had never before seen any thing like it—and from the effect of the queer objects that presented themselves to my notice, I confess I felt a much stronger inclination for laughing than feasting. But violent exertions are usually of short duration; and in pure astonishment, I stared when the first signs proclaimed the battle to be over. The gentlemen withdrew to their part of the vessel, and the ladies to the deck, and to the best of my judgement, the whole affair was concluded in less than ten minutes!

My husband and myself embraced the first opportunity of comparing notes. The scenery and the dinner was all during the voyage, that we witnessed in common; the former we enjoyed, the latter we did not. As all the females were consigned to one particular quarter of the vessel, I had an opportunity of spending about twelve hours in company



with a fair sample of the American ladies. The chilling impression left on my mind by the image of the captain's wife, mentioned in the first chapter, had long since passed away ; and although a full acquaintance with the character of that worthy lady had been of singular service to me, I was alike averse by nature and judgement, to condemn a whole nation for the reprobated failings of a single individual. The city lady might here be distinguished from the rest, as she paced the deck, by her close adherence to the latest Parisian fashions ; and the plain Dutch dame by her plain Dutch dress. Otherwise, there is a greater uniformity of external appearance, than would be seen with us, under similar circumstances. One thing in particular, I must not omit, though I never heard it before observed by any individual—I mean the striking uniformity of look—the statue-like appearance of the countenance, that prevails so universally among the women. They seem to be totally incapable of expressing mental emotions by any visible change of countenance, even when conversing upon excitable subjects. The cause of this I must leave to others to determine.

My husband thus describes the proceedings in his part of the vessel :

“The fore cabin was furnished with a bar, where ardent spirits and tobacco were supplied to those of the passengers that were destitute of such blessings ; and the regularity with which the glass circulated, might very well illustrate perpetual motion. The gentlemen were associated together in small groups, and were conversing chiefly on that theme of which the Americans never seem to tire—the revolutionary war. A number were amusing themselves by rallying a squire, as a justice of the twenty-five dollar court is here termed, and a little dark man, who figured as the deacon of a church. It appeared that the deacon was a farmer, and his neighbour the squire, kept a store for the sale of almost every thing, and for the convenience of barter, or ‘trading,’ as they call it. One cold morning during the last winter, the deacon took six bushels of wheat to the store of the squire, to be exchanged for as much salt as could be mutually agreed upon. After some time and many words were spent in manœuvring, they consented to barter measure for measure. The deacon proceeded to mete out his

grain, while the squire, complaining of the coldness of the morning amused himself by stamping upon his elastic floor. The deacon, of course, could not object to his neighbour warming his toes in what manner he pleased, in his own store, he therefore said nothing, although he discovered that this stamping had consolidated his six bushels of wheat into the compass of five and a half. The squire then commenced his part of the contract—to measure out the salt; and a convenient chillness simultaneously seized the toes of the deacon, which he endeavoured to counteract by stamping, after the example of the squire. ‘Stop, stop,’ said the squire, ‘what are you stamping for?’ ‘To warm my toes,’ was the answer. ‘But do you not see how you shake down the salt?’ ‘Not more than you shook down the wheat,’ was the reply. And so, as they acknowledged, ‘they got a fair trade between them.’

There was a youth on board whom I regarded with curiosity; he bore so striking a resemblance to Brom Bones, the hero of Sleepy Hollow, that nothing was wanting but the foxes tail in his hat to complete the similitude. I felt an unconquerable

inclination to learn something of this ‘roystering blade,’ and for this purpose, I stepped up to a young man, with whom he had just been conversing, and was very soon fully gratified. From this informant I learned a few circumstances concerning the hero in question ;—that, like his model, he was fond of a spirited horse ; and that he had lately figured conspicuously in a race—not with a goblin for a gallon of cider, but with a more substantial personage in the form of a deacon. I quite forget his name, for the image of Brom Bones was so correctly delineated in my mind, that it entirely obliterated his proper name from my memory.

It is necessary here to explain that in some townships in New England, a law is very properly enacted, against all Sunday travelling, except for the purpose of going to and returning from a place of worship ; any violation of which is visited with a fine of ten dollars.

A few Sundays ago, this Brom Bones accompanied with his negro in a very light waggon\* drawn

\* This vehicle is universally used by the country people ; it bears no resemblance to an English waggon, but is in fact, the lightest four-wheeled vehicle that can be conceived.

by an excellent horse, was out on a spree ; and his road lying close by a church, he determined to push forwards in defiance of the law, and hazard the consequences ; concluding that as the service had commenced, he should meet with no interruption. As he dashed past the church, he saw the horses belonging to the members of the congregation, tied up under a row of high trees, as is usual on such occasions in the summer ; but to his dismay, he also saw the deacon, bustling through the church-yard to mount his poney, as he *guessed*, to give him chase.

Now, as one half of the fine goes to the informer, and as it is represented with too much truth, alas, that these same deacons are ‘given to filthy lucre,’ look to thyself Brom Bones. Away went Bones, and away went the deacon ; the one impelled by the fear of losing ten dollars, and the other stimulated with the hope of gaining five. Nor was the chase without spectators ; for a portion of the juveniles *guessing* at what was up, from the sound of the wheels, and the absence of the deacon, slipped out to view the sport from the hill on which the church stood.

Bones's confidence in his horse began to fail, as he perceived the deacon gaining ground, and, like the beaver in the fable, he judged it the best policy to relinquish a part, in order to save the whole. He hastily gave a silver dollar to his negro, directing him to display it fully in the eyes of the deacon, and then deliberately to let it fall on the road. The negro obeyed; and the stratagem for that time had the desired effect. The deacon dismounted—for what deacon that keeps a store, would be so improvident as to ride over a dollar? While his pursuer was securing the coin, Bones exerted all his energies to escape from his clutches. But the deacon was quickly mounted, and again in the field.

The negro hinted to his master that the deacon's poney was 'blowed,' and that another dollar would save the ten. Bones thought the experiment worth trying, and furnished the black with the cash. Carefully did blackey turn it in the sun, to ensure its being seen distinctly; for he knew the race depended upon this point, as the deacon was just upon his haunches. He dropped it, and the deacon alighted, gathered it up, and speedily re-mounted. Five miles had now been ridden over with the utmost

speed, and both horses showed symptoms of distress—now hope prevailed, and now fear, in the breasts of the contending parties. At length a ‘pretty considerable’ slough at a turn in the road suddenly appeared to the horror of poor Bones, and closed the chase in favour of the deacon. Bones’s horse and waggon were seized as security for the fine; and his spiritual pursuer kept the two dollars as a remuneration for his exertions.”

I cannot say I admire these incidents; I must therefore plead their decided marks of national character as an apology for their insertion. The latter in particular, will illustrate the indecorous manner in which sacred and pecuniary matters are associated, more effectually than if volumes of sentiment were written on the subject.

Albany is the second city in the state of New York, it contains, I suppose, about 2500 inhabitants, a very large portion of which are Dutch; here are to be seen the oldest buildings in the United States.

In order to see as much of the country as possible, we landed on our return from Albany, at a small town a little below West Point, and about fifty

miles above New York ; having decided upon proceeding through the country towns by whatever conveyance we could obtain. This may appear a wild-goose scheme, but I think of it with much pleasure, as, in addition to the beauties of the scenery, which were passing lovely, we had an opportunity of seeing the villages and their inhabitants in their unadorned simplicity. We were fully gratified, for the enjoyment more than compensated for the inconvenience.

The place and neighbourhood where we landed, is almost exclusively occupied by families of Dutch extraction. They speak both Dutch and English fluently, are a simple hearted class of beings, read their bibles, and hate the Yankees.

I ought to have before explained this term, "Yankee." It is applied by all the Americans to the inhabitants of the five New England States, viz. Vermont, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. These people are reported by their southern neighbours as being remarkable for inquisitiveness and roguishness ; and many of them admit this equivocal species of compliment and acknowledge it with complacency.—While here, we



were told a farm had recently been purchased in the neighbourhood by a Yankee, and that the Dutchmen had submitted to some pecuniary sacrifice, in order to re-purchase it. I asked the reason, and received this answer, "We were frightened at him."

Families descended from the earliest settlers inhabit these banks of the Hudson. Their furniture, manners, and affairs, conduct the mind back to the days of the pilgrim fathers. But nothing is declining here ; new houses are building, the forest is daily yielding to the axe, and all things are in a state of active improvement. It is not in America, that Sultan Mahmoud's owls can endow their sons and daughters with ruined villages.

The farmer here spins his own wool and flax, and generally weaves his own cloth ; he mends his own farming implements, consumes the produce of his own land, and barter the remainder for other necessaries. As he has neither rent, tithes, nor taxes to pay, it is no wonder that his industry enables him to live in a state of absolute profusion.

Avowedly, I have never read any work that has appeared on the United States of America, but have formed my judgement of the character of some from

common report, and the few extracts that have fortuitously fallen in my way. It appears to me, that the observations of the Americans respecting many of these publications are nearly correct, viz. That they are penned to please some particular party, and not to promulgate a true representation of facts.

I will just state one instance, which I copy from a work that I never saw, till my attention was called to it this very hour. The authoress is giving an account of the American farmers, whom she honours with the designation of "Small landed proprietors, who farm their own freehold estates."

"When in Maryland, I went into the houses of several of these small proprietors, and remained long enough, and *looked* and *listened* sufficiently, to obtain a tolerably correct idea of their manner of living. One of these families consisted of a young man, his wife, two children, a female slave, and two young lads, slaves also. The farm belonged to the wife, and I was told, consisted of about *three hundred acres* of *indifferent* land, but all *cleared*. The house was built of wood, and looked as if the three slaves might have overturned it, had they pushed hard against the gable end. It contained one room of about twelve feet square; and another, adjoining it,

hardly larger than a *closet* : this second chamber was the *lodging-room* of the white part of the family. Above these rooms was a loft *without windows*, where, I was told, the "staying company" who visited them, were lodged. Near this mansion was a "shanty," a *black hole*, WITHOUT ANY WINDOW, which served as a KITCHEN and all other offices, and also as the lodging of the blacks !!!

We were invited to take tea with this family, and readily consented to do so.(!) Her female slave set out the great table, and placed upon it cups of the very coarsest blue ware, a little brown sugar in one, and a tiny drop of milk in another ; no butter, though the lady assured us she had a "deary" and two cows. Instead of butter, she "hoped we would fix a little relish with our crackers," in ancient English, eat salt meat and dry biscuits. Such was the fare !"

This lady must have been dreaming of a witches den. Only think of two black boys and one man, and he the owner, to do the work on a farm comprising three hundred acres of cleared land ! And what premises ! Where could the men live, while engaged in the long and arduous employment of clearing the land ? There are no workhouses here, whence gangs of paupers may be hired at pleasure. Reflecting on what I have seen, I much question

whether such a place as this could be found, as an abode for human beings, in any part of the Union. Consider the fare—salt fish and biscuits—and for English visitors too! Why, the very mice would desert such a dwelling! The whole affair assumes such an air of improbability, that if it contain even one single atom of truth, that atom is buried in falsehood.

But the worst feature is, that this is advanced as a sample of farm-house fare and farm-house hospitality in the United States. Verily, I have lived in an American farm-house, I have dined and taken tea in several, perhaps scores, in various directions from, and within a hundred miles of New York; yet, I never saw any thing like this! The farmers are much more censurable for their extravagant profusion than for their meanness. And when they entertain European visitors, they are so fond of displaying their abundance, that it is a very rare thing for them to allow such guests to depart destitute of substantial tokens of their liberality. In fact, many among them are grieved if their male guests leave them either sorrowful or sober.

Most freely do I admit, that persons of pure intentions may be mistaken in trivial matters, and thus innocently mislead others; but truth is quite as easily written as spoken, and should be particularly regarded in a narrative on the domestic manners of a foreign nation. Here, all fictitious descriptions, isolated cases, and every thing calculated to mislead, should be entirely discarded.

## CHAPTER V.

COUNTRY RESIDENCE.—THUNDER AND LIGHTNING.—  
CLIMATE.—CHEAP LAW.—CONCLUSION.

After various excursions and much deliberation, we fixed upon a small estate, comprising an excellent dwelling-house, with out-offices, and above fifty acres of land, delightfully situated on Long Island, and within about twenty-five miles from New York. This was the most delightful residence, both for beauty of situation and internal convenience that I ever inhabited, but with all its attractions, it was the scene of my severest afflictions.

The agreeable change from city to country at the delightful season of spring, made the first few weeks pass away most pleasantly. In this quarter of the globe, winter reigns with undisputed sway, from the first day of November to the last of April. Nature, refreshed by so long a repose and enlivened by the genial warmth of the sun, throws off the sombre robe of winter, and suddenly appears clad in her most lovely attire. Birds of gay plumage

resembling those of the tropics, with woodland flowers of all hues, and the bright foliage of the forest trees, simultaneously spring into existence with a rapidity that with us, would be considered miraculous. As an instance, I distinctly remember the buds of the trees being firmly closed on the 28th of April, and on the 12th of the following May, the foliage of the whole of them was as fully developed as in the midst of summer.

Strictly speaking, the American spring is confined to the first fortnight in May. It is a most delightful season, but sadly too short. Birds, such as for beauty, I never before saw at large, enliven the scenery with their bright plumage. Choice flowers, thick and numberless "as autumnal leaves that strew the brooks in Vallombrosa," are here seen, with their rich colours enhancing each others charms by a beauteous contrast. While myriads of butterflies, not the small pale coloured things of northern Europe, but creatures with wings of uncommon size and beauty, contribute their share to increase this fund of pleasure. Neither pen nor pencil can do justice to the landscape scenery at this period, viewed as it is, through the medium of

a clear atmosphere, that imparts a glowing warmth and renders the whole truly enchanting.

Every rose has its thorn, and the same bright sun that calls into existence these beauties, awakens also swarms of serpents and venomous reptiles of every kind. The bite of some of these is attended with distressing circumstances, and others among them, such as the black serpent and the copper-headed viper, have been known to inflict mortal wounds. I believe I am not whimsically affected, yet I could never look upon these dreadful creatures without shuddering, as they wriggled their way in odious contortions just from before my feet. The caution required to avoid stepping upon them, and the fear of some that are known to pursue the human species, greatly detracted from the pleasure of my woodland rambles; and, like the sword impending over the head of Damocles, dashed all my rural pleasure with fearful apprehension.

One day while walking in the garden, I narrowly escaped a bite from a black serpent, which our man-servant afterwards succeeded in killing; its skin was variegated with all the darker shades of different colours beautifully arranged: it measured



five feet two inches in length. After this, I was determined to walk in no other than a clear path.

About the latter part of May the heat of the sun becomes oppressive. Then, farewell to pleasure. Clouds of mosquitoes are ushered into existence, and myriads of flies fill every room. Now our dress, and almost our lives, become burthensome, we fan ourselves from morning to night and feel for those who are not blessed with an ice-house. Although the common flies are extremely numerous, they bear no proportion to the mosquitoes in point of annoyance. These are considered as minor evils by some persons, but as respects myself, the sharp stinging wounds inflicted by the latter, will not be very soon forgotten. I was confined to the house under medical treatment for a fortnight, in consequence of a bite I received from a mosquito. Certainly this is a singular case; but still it furnishes a proof of their noxious powers. I have been often told, that in their visitations, they respect the persons of those who are accustomed to drink largely of rum; but my eyes and understanding refuse their assent. Ablution in this liquor, it is true, is very grateful after enduring a day's cam-

paign with them. As a lotion for allaying the pain produced by these insects, it is very acceptable and perhaps this is its best recommendation.

With the hot weather comes thunder and lightning, and rain. The latter invariably falls in torrents, and if the wheat grew as high and as heavy in the ear as with us, it certainly could never arrive at maturity. A transatlantic thunder storm is truly sublime and terrible. The sky first becomes covered with black clouds, the wind blows violently, the clouds suddenly expand, and emit what appears to be a broad stream of liquid fire; the thunder instantaneously bursts forth with a crash, that I suppose, all the artillery in the world could not equal. This is usually repeated twice or thrice, and the storm exhausted by its own violence, is suddenly succeeded by a delightful calm. Æolus rends the vail of black clouds from the face of the sun, which now seems to shine with increasing heat and splendour; while the earth, being previously parched with excessive heat, and now suddenly deluged with torrents of rain, emits clouds of vapour, that for a short time envelope the landscape in a dense fog. This is quickly dispersed by the excessive heat of the sun;

the arid earth again thirsts for moisture, and we soon forget the storm.

The opinion prevailing in Europe respecting the salubrity of the United States, is more favourable than an examination will warrant. My remarks on this subject are the result of a patient and most painful investigation, aided by experience, alas, too dearly purchased. I shall confine my observations on the climate to the first summer we passed in America, and the succeeding winter; which, from being more uniform than the last year, are less liable to objection. The state of the thermometer and the variations of the winds, I select from a diary kept by Mr. Felton during our residence in the United States. The greatest heat this summer was a hundred and five degrees. From mid-day to five in the afternoon during the months of July, August, and September, the thermometer ranged between ninety and a hundred degrees—seldom above the latter, and in very few instances below the former; while the universal stillness of the air, rendered the heat quite as overpowering, and even more so, than the state of the index warrants us to suppose.

The climate, and its effects upon the constitution,

are always distasteful subjects to the Americans. They cannot subscribe to any other doctrine, than that which recommends theirs as the most salubrious climate in the world. This is asserted by them with as much confidence as if it were a self-evident truth ; and all who dispute it, are in danger of being overwhelmed by a torrent of displeasure. A physician paid us a visit one broiling day in July, and certainly did acknowledge that it was then hot—but, checking himself, he observed, “that the heat was nothing to speak of—just fair summer weather—hotter, no doubt than in England—but the perfection of summer.” We observed that the heat had, for some days past, been above ninety-six degrees in the shade. As we expected, he manifested symptoms of incredulity, which however, we soon dispelled by referring him to the thermometer, then standing at ninety-eight degrees. In the absence of positive proof like this, they will endeavour to evade the question in any way, rather than submit to acknowledge any fact that would jeopardize the character of their climate. And truly it is admirable, if the union of a Jamaica summer and a Moscow winter,

under one parallel, be acknowledged the standard of perfection.

I discovered to my sorrow, that the morning air here is not so wholesome as in England ; on the contrary, it is considered most pernicious. This greatly perplexed me in selecting the best time for a walk. The physician had interdicted the matutinal breezes—the mid-day was not to be thought of—and the evening gales were very unwholesome, and frequently as deadly and chill as the breath of the death angel. There are no cool evenings here in the summer as with us, so refreshing and so pleasant, in which we may luxuriate in all the delights of an evening's ramble. While the sun is above the horizon, he blazes away with insufferable heat, and his descent is mostly succeeded by a chillness that resembles the icy hand of death to the feelings, and frequently is such in reality to those who are often exposed to its influence. The sudden vicissitudes of the atmosphere, I consider the most dangerous feature of the whole affair ; for, incredible as it may appear, the mercury has fallen from ninety-five to fifty-six degrees in the short space of three hours.

A variation of twenty or twenty-five degrees, in the same period, is by no means an uncommon occurrence.

The houses in the country are almost universally formed of wood, the best of them are faced with shingles (thin plates of cedar), neatly painted: these are by no means deficient in comfort. For the sake of coolness in summer, they are so constructed as to furnish a shaded walk on both sides; and when flowers are trained to climb up the pillars, the whole has a very pleasing appearance.

During the hours of mid-day, no work can be done in the fields by white men; the "hands" therefore, return home and doze away the time in the out offices, and work early and late in order to atone for their meridian slumber.

The city is preferable as a place of residence during the heat of summer. The neat awnings that shelter the whole of the side walks prove an agreeable protection from the powerful influence of the sun's rays, when it is necessary to go from the doors. During the hottest part of the day little is done by the gentlemen, besides loitering about, reading the newspapers, and drinking iced

punch, and other mysterious compounds; while the ladies, reclining on the sofas fan themselves, drink lemonade, and doze. Business transactions of all kinds occupy the early hours of the morning; then the ice carts perambulate the city, and provisions for the day are procured. After mid-day the streets are deserted; those who have leisure, retire to doze away the hours; the shopkeeper closes his doors and slumbers behind the counter; a solemn stillness reigns, and the city seems forsaken and desolate.

The twilight is of very short duration, and the setting sun is succeeded by a greater state of darkness than with us; but, as a compensation, the moonlight appears clearer and much brighter, and in winter, it is truly delightful.

The scorching summer usually terminates with September; and is succeeded by a month of the most charming weather I ever experienced. This is October—the American autumn. Now the sun's dreaded rays lay aside a portion of their fiery force, the forest trees begin to change the hue of their leaves, and, instead of green, nature's universal livery, colours of all shades gradually appear, from the dark purple to the light yellow. The immense

variety of trees accounts for the many coloured foliage, and if variety be charming, it is here beheld in perfection—not merely the sombre tints seen at the same season in an English coppice—but purple, red, brown, and every colour that can be produced on the palette of the artist.

This is likewise the season for abundance. Apples, the finest in the world, peaches, melons, and fruit of every kind that grace the orchard, are produced in such profusion, that even in the city they are sold for very little more than the expence of their carriage. Maze, which is here cultivated with singular care and judgement, is now seen in every direction, waving its purple tassels in the breeze; and imparting a peculiar character to the landscape scenery.

The iron reign of winter usually commences about the middle of November. From that time till the last days of April the weather is excessively cold, but the atmosphere it must be allowed, is delightfully clear and pleasant. Were it a matter of choice, and were I doomed to live in America, I should certainly prefer a perpetual winter, cold as



it is, to the broiling summer and its extreme variations, with their dreaded consequences.

The lowest point of the thermometer this winter was three degrees below zero. This was in January, but for several days it was below ten degrees, and for weeks, with slight variations, it stood at eighteen. Although the cold in winter is very severe, still very little rain falls; or I should rather say, rain seldom falls; but hail, sleet, and snow comes plentifully in storms of considerable duration. In the absence of these the air is cold indeed, but delightfully pure and translucent.

The changes of the thermometer in winter are neither so sudden nor so rapid as in summer, but the winds are as fickle then, as during any period of the year. Those from the north and the west are equally cold, and the *north-west* wind is dreaded in winter more than any other. Frequently the wind will *suddenly* veer from a particular point of the compass to the one diametrically opposite. I never knew this to take place in England.

According to what I have advanced, the greatest heat during this year was 105°, and the greatest

cold  $3^{\circ}$  below zero ; the extreme variation therefore, will be  $108^{\circ}$ . Hence it appears, that during the summer, New York, which is situated about  $40^{\circ}$  of latitude, endures the heat of Egypt or Arabia, and, in winter, the cold of Stockholm or Petersburg. Nor is this all, for in no part of the old world, are the diurnal vicissitudes of the atmosphere either so sudden or in such extremes. Petersburg is cold in winter and cool in summer : Egypt is never absolutely cold—but the climate of the eastern shores of North America is ever variable, and alone uniform in unwholesomeness.

The *miasma* produced by the heat of the sun, from the vegetable matter deposited in the numberless marshes, that every where abound in an uncleared country, is another fruitful source of disease. Then there are sicknesses arising from local causes. With a climate marked by such extremes of temperature, and such sudden vicissitudes, besides the pestilential effluvia arising from vegetable decomposition, there can be no wonder if America is one of the most unhealthy places in the world.

Had I been in possession of these facts before I crossed the Atlantic, I should no doubt have con-

For surely the "things of a day" poured from the periodical press, in the form of newspapers and magazines, cannot with propriety be called a nation's literature. And here let me observe, that the newspaper press of England is as far superior to that of the United States, as Scott's historical novels are to the Ratcliffe romances of the last century.

It is also worthy of remark, that the American press is as far below the intellectual standard of their people, as the London press is above that of ours. Intelligence like money, with them is more equally distributed. The merchant and his clerk are generally on a par with respect to mental culture, while the porter in the warehouse is very few removes below either. On the other hand, profound scholars and men of great opulence are equally rare; and the nation may be said to be alike free from the influence of great capitalists and extreme destitution.

There is something pleasingly simple and patriarchal in the management of their rural affairs. The ploughing with oxen, and the use of these animals in treading out corn, forcibly reminds us of the scenes and usages in scripture history. The alacrity with which the natives combine to assist a

country with the bilious fever, and the distressing attacks of the chills; but I am thankful to say, none of us sunk under these visitations. With the exception of one little girl, myself and my family consisting of five individuals, besides three servants, were all at the same time confined to our beds. Many of our neighbours were in the same condition as ourselves, and I fear some were far worse. No relief could, therefore, be expected from that quarter. Our medical attendant was himself at the point of death, and the attention of others was wholly engrossed by their own connections.

So general was the epidemic, that no doubt, numbers were lost for want of proper attention, and those few who were well, and from motives of commiseration or curiosity, were induced to pay us a short visit, *entertained* us with the peculiar distresses of a long list of the dying and the dead. I hourly expected some of us would bid adieu to this world and then the most I could hope for, was a silent interment in unconsecrated ground, with no other requiem than the ocean's deep moan as it laved the neighbouring shore, or the sighing of the breezes on the trees of the forest.

cluded as I am now compelled to do, by dear-bought experience ; but no work that I could meet with was sufficiently explicit on this point ; all the information I could collect was delivered in terms too vague and indefinite to arrest the attention.

Many persons from Europe have visited the United States, for the prudential purpose of making an experiment, prior to their removal thither to spend the remainder of their days. They have, perhaps, landed just in the most healthy season of the year, and their attention benignly wholly engrossed by pecuniary matters, they entirely overlooked the subject of health. Attracted by novelty and charmed with the prospect, they have sent for their families and enrolled themselves as citizens ; but a year's experience, attended with a few fits of sickness, dispels the delusion, and convinces them, that the same country that appears so pleasant to the eye of a visiter, may present a different aspect when adopted for a permanent residence.

It is not my intention to dwell long in detailing the afflictions of my own family from ill health, but I cannot, with justice to my readers, omit all notice of this circumstance. We suffered the most in the

country with the bilious fever, and the distressing attacks of the chills; but I am thankful to say, none of us sunk under these visitations. With the exception of one little girl, myself and my family consisting of five individuals, besides three servants, were all at the same time confined to our beds. Many of our neighbours were in the same condition as ourselves, and I fear some were far worse. No relief could, therefore, be expected from that quarter. Our medical attendant was himself at the point of death, and the attention of others was wholly engrossed by their own connections.

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Providence, however, did not forsake us. One evening a person chanced to call who knew Mr. Felton, and at his own suggestion, took our horse and gig and went in quest of assistance. Contrary to our expectations, his exertions were crowned with success. He returned with a clever active American woman, to whom we were under great obligations, for she acted both as physician and nurse, and soon made us all as comfortable as circumstances would permit. From that day we began to recover, though it was months before the dreaded disorder entirely forsook us.

In taking a retrospective glance at the manners, customs, and affairs of this singular people, I am constrained to admit that there is much to admire, and many things worthy of commendation. Among these, the general character and circumstances of the great mass of the people stand prominently forth. In consequence of the high price of labour of every kind, and the comparative ease with which the essentials of life may be obtained, the very lowest of the people are well clad, and take a laudable pride in appearing clean and smart after the toil of the day is over. The theatre is the

grand point of attraction for numbers ; others assemble in reading rooms, or attend lectures, or religious meetings ; taverns and spirit stores have their share of frequenters ; while some few congregate to read and hear read the wisdom of Thomas Paine, and his coadjutors in the cause of infidelity. But, in justice it must be admitted, that very few prostrate their time to this latter purpose.

None of those ostensible instances of deep moral degradation, the wretched offspring of infamy and want, that force themselves, as it were, upon our notice in our densely populated cities, are to be met with here. Nor did I ever notice any of those extreme cases of abject destitution—so painful to contemplate, but still so numerous with us. In fact, during the whole period of my residence in the United States, I never saw the face of a single beggar.

There are no poor's rates, and the few whom misfortune has rendered proper objects for eleemosynary aid, find refuge in alms-houses supported by voluntary contributions.

The universal diffusion of knowledge is another pleasing object of contemplation. Public schools



are numerous and well supported ; and as almost the whole population to a man, are ardently engaged in the promotion or pursuit of political schemes, of one kind or another, it would be a remarkable circumstance were their children incapable of reading the newspapers.

Another grand stimulant to exertion in educational matters, is to be found in the acquisitive disposition of the people, and their love of commercial enterprise. Stripling tradesmen are here to be met with in numbers, pushing their various undertakings with all the ardour and recklessness of youth, seconded by an hereditary thirst for gain. Hence, from one cause or another, I conceive it would be a very difficult matter to find in any part of the Union a native-born American arrived at years of maturity, incapable of writing and keeping his accounts.

It were much to be wished that the planters in the south and other slave-owners, would bestow some little care upon the instruction of those unfortunate beings, that the chances of power have consigned to their charge. Yet so far are they from encouraging even the commonest kind of instruction,

that were the "schoolmaster abroad" here, he would be saluted with one clamorous war-whoop, throughout the whole of the slave states of this land of liberty. The legislators of Virginia in particular, have immortalized their humanity, by making it penal for any one to teach a negro to read, or to be found aiding, encouraging, or abetting in such a work of intellectual abomination!

Yet let me not be understood as speaking of the literature of the United States, in terms of unqualified praise. All their literary characters, who are considered clever by us, have reaped their laurels on British ground. As for the rest I can say very little. A few novels, written in the angels and despair style of Charlotte Smith, and two or three volumes of poetry were all that I ever saw. They are good things in their way—that is, good as opiates. I remember once to have been so scolded for speaking disrespectfully of one of their poets, that if I may be forgiven for the past I will do so no more.

But to resume the subject seriously, I think I am safe in asserting that there is no literature in the United States—or at least very little of sterling value; whatever may be the pretensions of some.

For surely the "things of a day" poured from the periodical press, in the form of newspapers and magazines, cannot with propriety be called a nation's literature. And here let me observe, that the newspaper press of England is as far superior to that of the United States, as Scott's historical novels are to the Ratcliffe romances of the last century.

It is also worthy of remark, that the American press is as far below the intellectual standard of their people, as the London press is above that of ours. Intelligence like money, with them is more equally distributed. The merchant and his clerk are generally on a par with respect to mental culture, while the porter in the warehouse is very few removes below either. On the other hand, profound scholars and men of great opulence are equally rare; and the nation may be said to be alike free from the influence of great capitalists and extreme destitution.

There is something pleasingly simple and patriarchal in the management of their rural affairs. The ploughing with oxen, and the use of these animals in treading out corn, forcibly reminds us of the scenes and usages in scripture history. The alacrity with which the natives combine to assist a

widow, a poor neighbour, or a stranger, deserves to be recorded in terms of the highest commendation.

As an illustration of the above remark,—suppose a farmer, from some one of the many causes of affliction to which all are liable, becomes incapable of cultivating his land. His neighbours repair to his house by appointment, with their oxen and implements; turn into his fields, and plough, sow, and harrow every acre on his farm that requires these operations. At the conclusion of their labours, they refresh themselves, if their friend be able to make suitable provision for such a number; if not, they return contentedly home satisfied with the consciousness of having performed a meritorious action.

If their united assistance be required in harvesting the crop, it is cheerfully given; and he who ill-naturedly withholds his aid, subjects himself to the eternal ban of the whole community. On one occasion of this nature, I saw nineteen ploughs at work in one field. Nothing displays the American character in so benevolent a point of view, as this unity of co-operation in cheerfully assisting those,

whom misfortune has deprived of the power of assisting themselves.

That equivocal species of blessing, cheap law, is another of those peculiarities that forcibly arrests the attention of strangers. The lawyers are here a host, surpassing in number the military, naval, and police forces united. They comprise men of all shades of talent and character, from the very highest to, alas, the very very lowest. Doubtless, as with us, they look upon their clients as tradesmen do upon their customers, as a source of profit and honourable competition. But in a nation of obstinate sticklers for trifles, where almost every tenth man is a lawyer, and where a cause may be tried for ten dollars, there is reason to fear that sharpness is sometimes thrust a little beyond the verge of honesty by some, despite the profession being gilded with the flattering distinction of honourable.

But the practitioners are not entirely to be blamed—the principle is objectionable. Should any desire to witness the developement of the cheap law system, in all the glories of its confusion, he may behold it here. Suits at law are perpetually throwing the peace of even rural society

